

# IN THESE TIMES

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Ernie Reppert, president of the Monessen USWA Local 1229

# The Alamo of the steel industry?

By Tim Peek

MONESSEN, PA

They sit on wooden folding chairs in the shade of a boarded-up movie theater, staring at the giant furnaces where they used to work and talking about their lives in the mill. The half-dozen steelworkers in front of Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corporation's Monessen plant are in a grim mood. They are here on the sixth day of a strike against the bankrupt steel company, fighting to maintain their wages and hold the line against a new round of concessions in the steel industry.

"There ain't no way I'm going to work for what the company's offering," declares Jimmy, a 35-year-old mill worker picketing at gate four. Like the other members of Local 1229 in Monessen, he thinks the union has given more than enough and it's time to draw the line.

While the dispute at Wheeling-Pittsburgh centers on whether the company needs the wage cut to survive, the issue goes much deeper. Next summer the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) contracts with the nation's other major steelmakers expire, and any concessions granted to Wheeling-Pittsburgh will set a precedent for bargaining in those contracts. The USWA has decided to draw the line against further concessions in the steel industry at Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel's nine plants in the Monongahela and Ohio river valleys.

"This is it. If we go down, the company goes down with us," says another striker. "This is the Alamo of the steel industry."

Wheeling-Pittsburgh filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy April 16 after losing \$192 million in the last three years. For the first six months of this year the company posted additional losses of \$76 million. Wheeling-Pittsburgh owes more than \$500 million to banks and suppliers. Yet chapter 11 bankruptcy allows a firm to continue operating while a restructuring plan is worked out to put the company back on a profitable basis and pay off creditors.

In a bid to get the firm back on its feet, Wheeling-Pittsburgh management has sought to modernize its plants and lower labor costs. Since 1982 the company and the USWA, which represents the company's 8,200 workers in Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia, have agreed to three concessionary contracts. In May management asked the union to agree to further concessions—a 29 percent wage cut from a total wage and benefits package of \$21.40 an hour to \$15.20 an hour for the next five years. The union resisted. Then on May 9 the company filed a motion with federal bankruptcy Judge Warren Bentz, who is presiding over the bankruptcy proceedings, to void the collective bargaining agreement with the USWA, forcing them to take a new contract. That motion was granted July 17. Three days later the union went out on strike, marking the beginning of the steel industry's first strike in 26 years.

Judge Bentz' ruling is the first major interpretation of the revised bankruptcy law governing collective bargaining agreements with companies in Chapter 11. The law was rewritten in 1984 to prevent businesses from going into bankruptcy as a means of shedding their unions. The best known example of this "bankruptcy bargaining" was Continental Airlines' 1983 maneuver to shake off the pilots union.

Bentz' ruling is "a very strange one indeed," said an attorney who specializes in bankruptcies. He said that Congress' 1984 amendments to the code were designed to prevent just this sort of ruling.

While the decision to allow Wheeling-Pittsburgh to abrogate its contract with 8,200 steelworkers strengthens management's hand, it may be a Pyrrhic victory. Wheeling-Pittsburgh is in dire financial straits, squeezed by a weak steel market and a heavy debt load. Many

stock market analysts say that the lower labor costs alone will not be enough to save the company.

According to Greg Drahuschak, a Pittsburgh-area stock analyst, "The judge's ruling itself wouldn't have any effect. You're talking about a company that's a hell of a lot more than just a simple question of contracts or not. It's another piece of the problem that they have."

Ironically, Wheeling-Pittsburgh incurred its killing debt load to finance an aggressive modernization program that made the company one of the most efficient steel producers in the nation. The Monessen plant boasts a state-of-the-art rail mill and continuous caster. Analysts say that the firm is well-situated to take advantage of any upturn in the domestic steel market, should it last long enough to see it.

Company chair Dennis Carney has said that a strike would be the firm's death knell, but Wall Street analysts disagree. Some believe that a strike might work to the company's advantage, since it could use it as an opportunity to break or severely weaken the union. The company has enough cash and inventories built up to last for at least the rest of the summer without operating. After that, management will have to consider bringing in strikebreakers or liquidating the company.

Because the union's contract is now void, Wheeling-Pittsburgh is free to bring in new workers under a non-union agreement, ignoring the USWA. Management is in an excellent position to break the union. With unemployment among steelworkers at all-time highs and Wheeling-Pittsburgh operating under the protection of the bankruptcy laws, the best the union can do is threaten to destroy the company, taking its jobs down with it.

Jane Collin, a steel industry analyst for Standard and Poors, Inc., says that a company decision to bring in strikebreakers "would be the most favorable solution of all, in my opinion."

Three weeks ago, management softened its stand somewhat, offering the union a wage package of \$17.50 for six months, up from the \$15.20 the company said it needed to survive. But that latest offer also contained onerous provisions to eliminate the current grievance procedure, to allow the company to change seniority and job classifications and to bring in outside contractors for certain mill work. The \$17.50 offer would give the workers an average gross wage of \$7.95 an hour before taxes.

The union leadership rejected the package. Chief USWA negotiator Paul Rusen called the latest offer "a ridiculous document."

In spite of what analysts think about the union's ability to hold out in a strike, the rank and file is eager. John Tirpak, vice president of USWA Local 1223 in Yorkville, says that workers are tired of giving concessions only to be asked for more. And he rejects the popular argument that half a loaf is better than none.

"I haven't heard any of that talk down here," he says. "these people are already hip to the fact that they're already working for half a loaf. If we take any less, we're talking about quarter loaves. The union members at Wheeling-Pittsburgh are tired of being the first domino to fall every time there's a downward spiral in the standard of living of steelworkers. We're tired of being the capital S in SCAB."

So far both the company and the union have been talking tough, not budging from their public stands and hoping to stare the opponent down. In spite of the bluster, most observers predict there will be a last-minute compromise. As Collin put it, "They've both got too

## THE STORY

much to lose."

But if the workers in Monessen are any indication, the union leadership will have a hard time selling any sort of concessions to the rank and file. The previous concessions were seen as distasteful but necessary, yet now steelworkers like Jimmy are angry. And with union leadership elections coming up this fall, the negotiators will be wary of bringing that wrath down on themselves.

District 15 Director Andrew "Lefty" Palm, one of the chief USWA negotiators, faces a challenge from reform candidate Ronny Wiesen, who is running for Palm's seat on a "no more concessions" platform.

At least one prominent industry analyst expects the union "to go to the wall" at Wheeling-Pittsburgh. Although a tough union stance in this strike could cost the union 8,200 jobs, it might eventually prove the right decision if the union recoups its losses in future negotiations with other companies.

"My feeling is that the union consciously wants to sacrifice Wheeling-Pittsburgh to help solve the problem of industry overcapacity and to prevent a low-cost company from setting a precedent to break the national contract," he says. "If Wheeling-Pittsburgh is liquidated, the six major steel companies are stronger, the contract with the six major steel companies is stronger and the wage level is higher."

If no new contract agreement is made, the company will be able to walk away from the workers' pension fund. On July 26 management sent a letter to pensioners telling them that they would not make any more payments into the pension fund, which is already underfunded. If the company abandons the fund, the federal Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation will have to pick up the tab. With a \$300 million liability, it will be by far the largest pension ever rescued by the quasi-governmental agency.

The strikers in Monessen know that their chances of preserving their jobs are slim, but one week into the strike they were resolved to see it through to the bitter end. "Things just can't go on like this. A man needs to earn a decent wage," said a striker, as tears welled in his eyes. "It's killing us. It's killing the whole town."

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## IN THESE TIMES



Well-armed South African police can arrest, question and detain anyone without a charge.

*Editor's note: The following report was written before the South African government announced on July 31 sweeping restrictions on funerals for victims of civil unrest in black townships.*

By Michael Calabrese

PORT ELIZABETH, SOUTH AFRICA

**I**N THIS COUNTRY THE BANNING OF PUBLIC meetings turns funerals for victims of unrest into an opportunity for mass political protest. In a dusty stadium outside Cradock, a small, isolated town in the troubled Eastern Cape region, an estimated 50,000 apartheid opponents from around the country gathered on July 20 to sing freedom songs, denounce the government and bury their dead.

The morning's atmosphere of cheerful defiance quickly turned to somber silence when two dozen clergymen led the families and caskets of four murdered black leaders onto a rise facing the crowd. Little girls wearing white wedding gowns and carrying candles took up a vigil as angels beside the coffins, three of which were draped in the black, green and gold tricolor of the exiled African National Congress (ANC). A red cloth covered a fourth box bearing the mutilated remains of Matthew Goniwe, the latest martyr to become a symbol of the sacrifices blacks seem willing to shoulder to overthrow apartheid. Overhead, a huge Soviet flag and the banner of the outlawed South African Communist Party were brazenly displayed for the first time at a mass funeral.

For a moment everyone seemed to forget the chilling implications of rumors that State President P.W. Botha would declare a "state of emergency" later that day and that a mobile unit of "enemy troops" were visible on a hill overlooking the township. While the police kept a respectful distance away, one leader after another rose to propose new tactics of resistance and to suggest state complicity in the disappearance, and possible murder, of a score of top officials of the United Democratic Front (UDF), an alliance of more than 600 anti-apartheid organizations claiming 1.5 million members.

Between speakers and outside the family vigils that went on throughout the previous night, crowds danced wildly to songs pledging support for the ANC and the armed struggle. "Come back, Tambo, come back; La Grange's dogs we will burn them with fire and they will cease to exist," they sang in Xhosa, referring to ANC President Oliver Tambo and Louis LaGrange, state minister of law and order.

In many ways the funeral in Cradock—reportedly the biggest of its kind since Black Consciousness leader Steven Biko died in detention eight years ago—represented another turning point in the cycle of black resistance and state repression. It marked the culmination of a largely suc-

## Pretoria's desperate measures

cessful campaign by radical blacks to render the townships "ungovernable." But the brutal murder of the UDF's Goniwe, and the persistent rumors of a state of emergency that marred his funeral, also marked a realization that the state had begun a systematic crackdown on the organizations of resistance that would make use of mass detentions and, according to the UDF, the assassination of key community leaders.

During the first week after the state of emergency went into effect July 21, the police reported that more than 1,000 people had been taken into indefinite detention, most of them black members of youth and community groups affiliated with the UDF. At least 16 blacks had been killed by the police and army.

The emergency order applies to 36 magisterial districts in the Vaal industrial area around Johannesburg and in the more rural Eastern Cape region around Port Elizabeth, a city on the Indian Ocean north of Cape Town.

### What the emergency means.

Under the emergency, police can arrest anyone without warrant or charge, can interrogate any detained person and can indefinitely deny the person contact with their family or with an attorney. It is an offense for any person, including the press, to disclose the identity of a detained person. While the security police exercised most of these powers previously under the Internal Security Act, a significant departure is an indemnity clause that immunizes the state and its agents from any criminal or civil claim for their conduct, however wrongful, in the affected townships.

In Johannesburg, the first target of the emergency was a busload of UDF supporters returning from Cradock. After questioning, all but a few leaders were released. Two days later police raided the offices of the UDF and of the Detainees Parents Support Committee (DPSC), a human rights group that monitors and publicizes political detentions. On day four of the emergency, the DPSC issued a statement warning that because of the well-documented use of torture against political detainees, the death of some of those arrested two weeks ago should be expected. Police spokesmen deny they use torture and claim that the death of five previously healthy activists in police custody this year resulted from suicides or accidents.

In the Eastern Cape townships, six moderate black clergymen were among the first arrested after evening services Sunday. One minister, Rev. Mvume Dandala, preached that evening to a white congregation about

the need for both races to renounce violence and engage in peaceful reconciliation. According to Rev. George Irvine, head of the Methodist Church in the Eastern Cape, "Mvume phoned me at 2:30 Sunday morning. 'They are here,' he whispered. While we had a prayer over the phone they broke down his door and took him away with guns."

Irvine and Anglican Bishop Bruce Evans—both outspoken apartheid opponents—told *In These Times* that the detention of black clergy and moderate leaders indicates to them that the state is determined not to seek a negotiated settlement with credible black leaders.

By mid-week the police claimed a general calm had been achieved in the black areas. But blacks in the Vaal townships reported widespread police brutality and heightened resistance by gangs of youths boycotting classes. Although newspapers inside South Africa are not permitted to report particular incidents of unrest, reliable sources in the black community said several youths were killed when police moved in to rescue an army vehicle being stoned by a mob of some 4,000 youths in KwaThema township near Johannesburg.

In Graaf-Reinet, a country town 125 miles north of Port Elizabeth, this reporter was arrested on day two of the emergency, along with another American human rights lawyer and Diane Bishop, a member of the Cape provincial parliament. Bishop and Molly Blackburn, another Cape parliament member who is internationally known for her anti-apartheid efforts, were investigating complaints that police had stoned homes in the Hillside township adjacent to Graaf-Reinet on the night before the funeral in Cradock. Residents claimed three white policemen hurled rocks through dozens of windows while laughing and taunting residents to stop them.

Soon after we arrived to take statements and photograph the rows of homes with broken windows, the police vans escorted us to police headquarters. After nearly two hours in custody—and after inquiries to Pretoria by the American consulate in Cape Town—the group returned to the township and hurriedly took statements while armored personnel carriers assembled nearby.

In one of the tiny, tin-roofed homes, Mary Swazi, a middle-aged invalid, described what happened as she lay alone in the house that night. When she heard windows shattering, women screaming and men laughing, she sat up and looked out the window above her bed. Just then the butt end of a rifle came crashing through the window once, then again, cutting her with fragments of flying glass.

In the white section of Graaf-Reinet that day, police brandishing thick rubber whips and wooden clubs patrolled the shopping district adjoining the township. Black people of all ages crossed the street or cringed up against a wall as the police passed in pairs, slapping the whips against the pavement. Local blacks claimed police were using force to chase away youths they suspected of intimidating other blacks who might have an inclination to break the consumer boycott there.

"We have plenty of recorded evidence not only of the police breaking the law in terms of people's rights after they have been arrested, but of actually participating in acts of violence such as the stoning and petrol-bombing of homes and unprovoked assaults on people," claimed Blackburn, who belongs to the white opposition Progressive Federal Party.

The next morning, 45 minutes before she

## Black rejection of government authority is becoming better organized and is growing.

was to meet a group of former Democratic Party cabinet members on a study tour organized by the Ford Foundation, Blackburn was arrested and charged with attending an illegal public gathering. None of the other 15,000 people in attendance were arrested. Although released later the same day on bail, she is banned from the townships, where she had been actively investigating complaints against the police.

Blackburn, Bishop and other progressive whites said the crackdown indicated a surprisingly early apprehension by the government that it is losing control of the townships. Other whites, including some business leaders, suggested that Botha sought to head off increasingly harsh right-wing critics who claimed that National Party attempts to appease black radicals and international opinion with promises of reform is being interpreted as a sign of weakness that will only lead to unacceptable demands and ultimately to revolution.

"I don't think they are so worried about the actual violence," Blackburn said. "But the whole community council system is collapsing around them. Their new constitu-

*Continued on page 10*



# INSHORT

David Futrelle

## Welcome mat withdrawn

Last month the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) initiated proceedings to deport Edgar Chamorro, an ex-*contra* leader living in the U.S. since 1979 who has begun to criticize sharply U.S. Central American policy and his former CIA employers. The notification letter was sent to him, oddly enough, just a week after the *New York Times* and the *Miami Herald* published critical Op-Ed pieces by him and only one day after he met with Congress members to advocate ending all *contra* aid. Chamorro was given broad freedom to enter and leave the U.S. during the time of his leadership of the CIA-directed Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN). But, as he told the *Times*, "Once I stopped working for the FDN they stopped my privileges.... Is that just a coincidence?" INS District Director Perry Rivkind noted that any political motivation "would be a violation of law," and told Chamorro that it was just a "twist of fate."

A virtual epidemic of such synchronicity seems to have broken out in south Florida. A few days prior to his decision to act against Chamorro, Rivkind was a guest of honor at the Pavillion luxury hotel at a *contra* fundraiser hosted by the local FDN office and Cuban-American Republicans. Chamorro's lawyer was later told by Rivkind that he could always accuse Chamorro of being a Communist and terrorist in order to deport him. That threat led Chamorro's lawyer and an American Civil Liberties Union counselor to suggest a low profile and more restraint for Chamorro's local political activities. Chamorro has since turned down speaking invitations at two local colleges and at a political rally against the INS, which on his behalf demanded "Hands off Chamorro!"

Coincidentally, a Miami Cuban-American radio station, WQBA, subsequently aired an editorial by the station's pro-*contra* Cuban exile director, Tomás García Fuste, that attacked Chamorro as pro-Sandinista and a "Communist," and encouraged people of similar opinion to demonstrate at his home in neighboring Key Biscayne. Chamorro told *In These Times*: "All this inflammatory rhetoric from the White House has created a radical climate in Miami.... People connected with the FDN created a hate campaign against me after the WQBA editorial, and they went house to house with flyers that denounced me as a Communist. The bottom line is that these people see opposition to U.S. policy as pro-Sandinista, which I am not." Although the INS appeal hearing Chamorro currently awaits, may be delayed indefinitely because of publicity, deportation may be the least of Chamorro's current worries. His life and the lives of his sister-in-law and mother were threatened recently by an anonymous phone caller.

## Saturn lands

By the end of the decade, nearly half a million small cars a year should be rolling off the assembly lines of the Saturn Corp., a new General Motors subsidiary that will build a thoroughly integrated, modern plant near the small town of Spring Hill, in the "right-to-work" state of Tennessee.

The last hurdle before the site was announced last week, following months of often desperate and demeaning grovelling by state and local officials across the country, was a tentative labor agreement. The executive board of the United Auto Workers, already a participant in planning the facility, okayed the agreement with one dissenting vote. Vice President and GM Division Director Donald Ephlin described it as preserving traditional union objectives while attaining new goals, especially worker involvement in decision-making, job security (four-fifths of workers will be protected against all but extraordinary layoffs and everyone will be on salary) and a reduction in the often irritating status distinctions in the plant.

GM will get much greater flexibility in assigning workers, including skilled tradespeople who will have far fewer job classifications, and a commitment from the union to make the plant competitive and productive. Eventually workers will get 80 percent of the average wage in the unionized auto industry plus bonus payments. How those are calculated will make a tremendous difference in whether Saturn "members" will work harder than other auto workers, or make comparable pay.

UAW officials are convinced that the consensus management that extends from "work units" under a

UAW counselor to a two-level strategic advisory committee means that they can effectively block any decision, although they will be expected to compromise. The union will retain some grievance procedure and the right to strike. Despite his enthusiasm for the "great strides" represented by the plan, UAW President Owen Bieber said that it would not set a precedent for the industry unless a similar "total concept" were established. But the auto companies seem to think otherwise.

Peter Kelly, president of UAW Local 160 and a veteran critic of the union leadership, denounced an earlier version of the agreement as "collaboration with the corporation" and as destructive to the UAW and labor generally. The Saturn project raises several important issues. Should unions take part in traditional management decisions? If so, will workers and the union have effective power, and will they have a distinctive strategy for the business? By making Saturn separate, GM assures that the new corporation will feel directly the competition in a fierce small-car market dominated by low-wage workers overseas, and without the cushion of GM's other operations or more profitable large cars. That not-so-invisible hand will rest heavily on Saturn workers.

## Presser cooker

When the federal government decided last month not to prosecute Teamsters Union President Jackie Presser on charges of embezzlement, many wondered if the decision had more to do with politics than with the alleged lack of "prosecutive merit" of the case. Presser, who has close ties with the Reagan administration and with Attorney General Ed Meese, is the only major union leader who supports Reagan. For Rick Smith, assistant organizer for Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), there's no question about it—Presser has used his political influence "to keep his butt out of jail."

Justice Department prosecutors charged that Presser had been involved in paying money to "ghost employees" who did no work. Several of these "ghosts," including Presser's uncle, have already been convicted, and the prosecutors presented detailed evidence that Presser, who was—and still is—treasurer of the local where the ghost payrolling occurred, was aware of the scam. "Everything pointed to Presser," Smith told *In These Times*. "We feel he should be brought to justice."

Though charges of corruption may not dethrone Presser, problems in the union—including a carhauers strike and a rapidly crumbling freight agreement—might. Dissatisfaction with Presser is widespread among rank-and-file members, according to Smith, and the

"unholy alliance" of officials who appointed Presser to head the union in 1983 "is starting to break." There's a big Teamster convention scheduled for next May. Stay tuned.

## Rhetoric watch

Ronald Reagan claims that human rights are at the "moral center" of U.S. foreign policy. Not so, says the human rights monitoring group Americas Watch, which in a report issued in July charges that the Reagan administration's approach to human rights in Nicaragua is "deceptive and harmful." While "the administration's accusations against Nicaragua rest upon a core of fact"—abuses committed by the Sandinistas and condemned by Americas Watch—the report argues that "around the core of fact...U.S. officials have built an edifice of innuendo and exaggeration." Further, "misuse of human rights data has become pervasive" in reports issued by the State Department, in reports and statements by administration officials and, "most notably, in the president's own remarks."

The administration, by exaggerating the abuses committed by the Sandinistas and by ignoring almost completely the abuses committed by the *contras*, has used the issue of human rights "in the service of a foreign policy that seeks to advance other interests." Americas Watch reiterates its previous claims that the *contras* are the most serious violators of human rights in Nicaragua and argues that support for the *contras* "is, therefore, a policy clearly inimical to human rights."

The State Department, predictably, said that it stood by its reports and called the charges of deception "ridiculous." But did the Americas Watch report have even a "core of fact" to it? One official *In These Times* contacted admitted that at least one instance of what Americas Watch condemned as distortion could be seen as misleading, but was probably not "deliberately" so. A State Department report had noted in passing that "some" of the 60 disappearances documented in 1984 might actually have occurred in previous years. In fact, as the State Department source for the figure acknowledged, all but eight of them had. The official, who condemned the Americas Watch report as overly polemical, also admitted that some of President Reagan's statements—referring to Nicaragua as a "totalitarian dungeon" and so on—might contain "a bit of hyperbole." Which is exactly, says Americas Watch, what makes them so dangerous.

The report can be obtained for \$8.00 from Americas Watch, 36 W. 44th St., New York, NY 10036.

Contributors this week: Bill Hall and David Moberg



"The History of Life," a book describing the history of the Ribbon Around the World, with 400 photographs of the segments of the ribbon is now available from... Asheville, NC 28901.



By Salim Muwakkil

**A**LTHOUGH THE CIVIL RIGHTS movement has helped crack the door of American opportunity for blacks with the requisite skills, education or cultural orientation, it has failed to improve the lot of the expanding black underclass. The full extent of this failure, however, is only beginning to be understood.

Recently released studies, analyzing the latest census data, have revealed an alarming deterioration in the condition of African-Americans in virtually every measurable category and across the demographic spectrum. Black leadership, already floundering in the wake of the Reagan revolution, has been caught off-guard by the severity of the situation. With a special sense of urgency and unanimity, black leaders are beginning to counsel an increased emphasis on internal development.

"While we certainly can't exempt the government from executing its responsibility, we can't wait for it to see the light. We simply must assume more of the burden for our own freedom," explained John Jacob, president of the National Urban League (NUL) in one of his syndicated columns. "Much depends on our own efforts to strengthen black families and to significantly improve education for our children."

According to statistics compiled by the NUL, the ratio of median black family income to the white family median fell from .61 in 1970 to .56 in 1981, and black unemployment increased by 140 percent between 1972 and 1982. One out of every three blacks—compared to one out of 10 whites—is below the official poverty level. In per capita terms, the black population received four times as much income from welfare assistance for individuals and almost five times as much for families as did whites.

A new report by the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), a private lobby group based in Washington, D.C., details the worsening conditions of black youth. The CDF found that for the first time in more than a decade, the black infant mortality rate has been increasing. The study also revealed that compared to whites, black children are five times as likely to be murdered as teenagers, four times as likely to be incarcerated between 15 and 19 and four times as likely to live in a female-headed household (only 40 percent of black children live in two-parent households). Only 67 percent of black children have an employed parent, the report noted.

Those are only some of the figures, but they make clear that the African-American community is in the midst of a crisis, the dimensions of which are so broad and deep there is a real possibility it may develop into a permanent feature of life.

"The Reagan administration has declared war on the black community," argues Conrad Worrill, head of the National Black United Front (NBUF). "The criminal justice system is jailing black men at an increasing rate, teenage pregnancies are proliferating, black suicides are increasing, certain hospitals around the country are refusing service to poor blacks, elderly blacks are getting much poorer.... Racist America is getting us coming into the world and going out of it. But one thing that's happening in this crisis is that it's pulling black folks together."

Founded in 1980 to jolt the black liberation movement out of its doldrums and to provide an organizational focus for strategies based on black nationalist principles, NBUF has become one of the fastest growing black groups in the country. The group is particularly active in police brutality cases, urban housing problems (NBUF has launched what it calls a Campaign Against Black Removal) and the Free South Africa Movement. Last year NBUF provided crucial assistance to Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign.

Jackson was the keynote speaker at the group's annual convention in Houston and he praised it highly. "Many struggles, one front" and "unity without uniformity" (borrowed from the theme of the 1972 National Black Political Convention in Gary, Ind.)

are phrases that NBUF members like to use to characterize their group.

Worrill believes that Reagan may be just the catalyst needed to force black leaders out of their ambivalence and back into the creative struggle. "Cowboy Ron is radicalizing and unifying the movement like nothing before," he says. "There was a time when civil rights groups wouldn't even mention Africa, for example. Perhaps they were afraid of being associated with savages or something—I don't know. But today, many in the civil rights community are deeply involved in the Free South Africa Movement and other African issues. I heard that even the Urban League marched on the South African consulate. Now that's proof that there's been a significant change."

**The African-American community is in the midst of a crisis so broad and deep, it may become a permanent feature of life.**



Paul Comstock

## IN THE NATION

### RACE RELATIONS

# Civil rights leaders shift course inward

Part of Worrill's optimism can be attributed to wishful thinking, but his observation on changes in the civil rights movement are on target. Chastened and humbled by their inability to halt the burgeoning growth of the underclass, civil righters are turning inward and toward strategies they once decried.

#### Racial scapegoating.

Many white people who count themselves allies in black America's struggle for equality were mystified last year at black leadership's reluctance to denounce Minister Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam (NOI). In their minds, Farrakhan's anti-white, black supremacist rhetoric seemed a dangerous throwback to an unenlightened era, and they wondered why black leaders missed the opportunity to condemn such a

bigoted demagogue.

Most of those who urged Farrakhan be rebuked probably have never walked down a ghetto street after dark and felt a sense of relief upon spotting one of Farrakhan's followers. They're also probably unacquainted with felons, drug addicts or other undesirables who have been rehabilitated and reformed by the NOI. In short, they don't understand the complex relationship that has developed between the NOI and the black community. Many black Americans, particularly that growing segment known as the underclass, perceive Black Muslims as an oasis in a wasteland of ghetto pathologies, and when Farrakhan speaks they hear hope. Whites hear hate.

There is both, and that's what makes Farrakhan's message so dangerous. The menace is not just in the NOI's racist doc-

trine. The NOI is dangerous because it gives support to the notion that racial scapegoating is necessary to motivate those most in need of motivation. Supporters of the Black Muslims and similar black nationalist groups have long argued that demonizing whites may be the most effective way to attract the attention and focus the energy of the discontent, but otherwise hapless, black masses. They note that the groups that have enjoyed the largest grassroots black membership have been black nationalist organizations that, as part of their doctrine, impute immoral behavior to whites' intrinsic nature.

For years, mainstream civil rights organizations gave implicit support to the scapegoating theory, though they publicly rejected it. They did this by ceding to the NOI all attempts to rehabilitate the hardcore losers of the black community. The efforts of the mainstream groups were focused almost exclusively on a constituency that ranked itself way above the grassroots. The folkways and lifestyles of lower-class blacks were treated with general derision by groups like the Urban League, the NAACP and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

These groups assumed that once racial barriers were cleared away, only those who lacked character would remain poor or criminally inclined. The late Whitney Young Jr., the former leader of the Urban League, best summed up their attitude in 1964, the year of the first "long hot summer" riots: "People who live in \$20,000 houses don't throw stones." Although the average cost of housing has more than tripled since Young's expression of faith in American capitalism, there are probably fewer blacks today who can afford the \$20,000 house than there were then.

#### Changing tactics.

"Black religious, educational and business institutions are intensifying their cooperative efforts toward economic development of our community," says the Rev. Joseph E. Lowery, president of the SCLC. Although Lowery is reluctant to admit that SCLC has undergone a change in emphasis, the change is evident. In 1980, the Revs. Ralph D. Abernathy and Hosea Williams—both former civil rights luminaries, associates of Martin Luther King Jr. and former officials of SCLC—denounced the SCLC as being taken over by "middle-class Negroes groveling for crumbs from the Democratic Party."

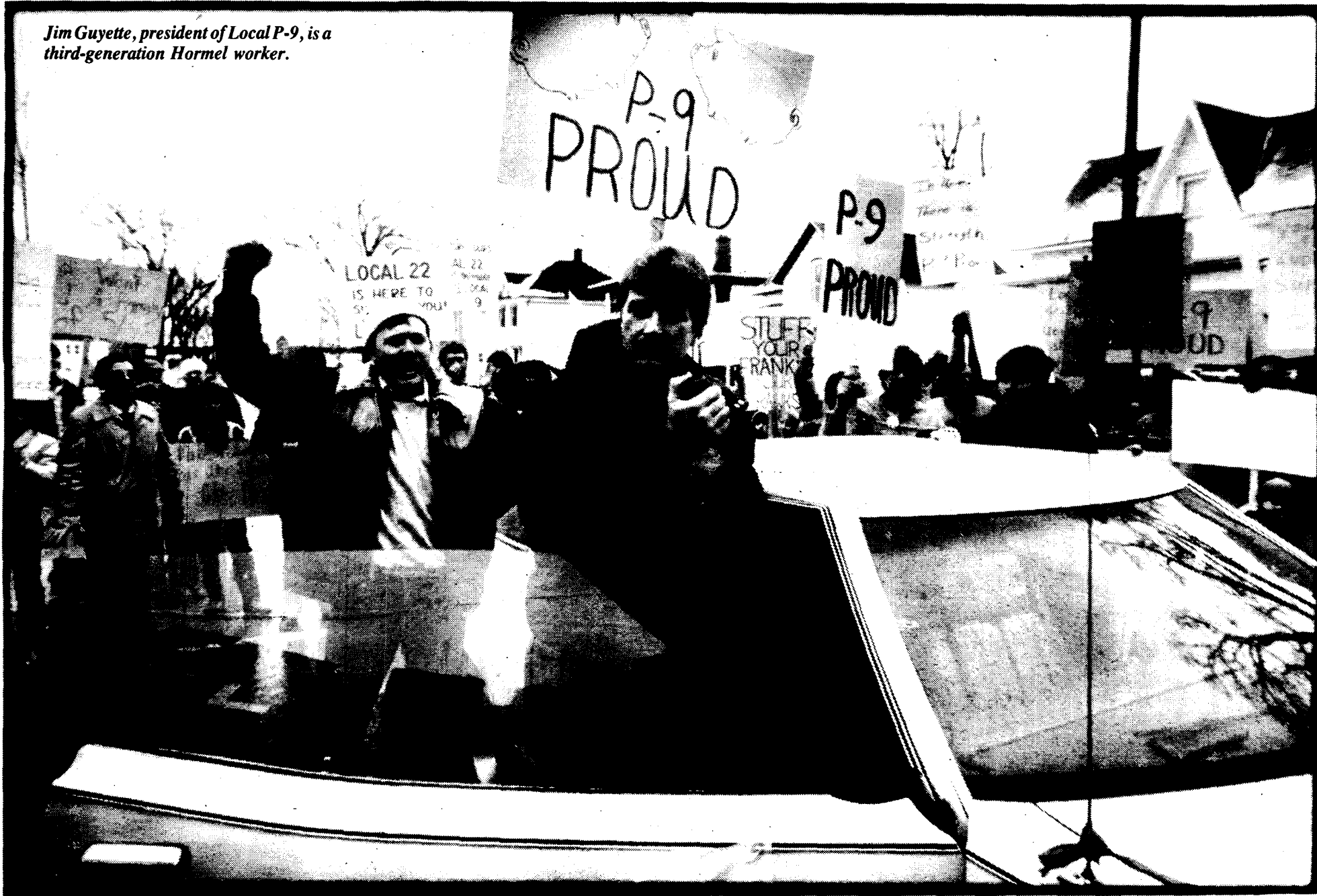
The NAACP is focusing much of its attention on a tradism program entitled "Operation Fair Share" and is turning away from its reliance on government programs. Tradism is a tactic pioneered largely by Jesse Jackson's Operation PUSH. It works like this: a group meets with top executives of corporations doing business in the black community and argues, in effect: "You do a percentage of business in the black community and we want a similar percentage of the jobs, franchises and contractual services. If you don't respond fairly we may withdraw our patronage from your product." In other words, treat us right or we'll boycott.

All of these approaches are attempts to deal with new socio-economic realities, and it hasn't been easy. Weaned on the welfare-state policies on which the Reagan administration has declared war, these leaders were unprepared for the federal government's philosophical conversion. Confronted with both Reagan's vision of America and the failure of past government programs to change chronic patterns of dependency, the civil rights movement has been forced to change tactics.

The success of Farrakhan's NOI in rehabilitating the community's down-and-outs has grown in importance as the number of down-and-outs has increased and grown to threaten the well-being of the entire black community—and, if those numbers continue to grow, the entire country. But since mainstream groups have scant experience in dealing with underclassers, they find themselves suddenly beholden to a group whose philosophy denigrates the very sense of racial justice that inspired the civil rights movement. ■



*Jim Guyette, president of Local P-9, is a third-generation Hormel worker.*



*This is the conclusion of the report on the meatpacking industry that began in the July 24 issue with a description of how the once well-paid, strongly unionized workforce in this large and important industry has been under attack by employers. The two-part article is the third in a series on the Midwestern economy, or "rust belt," by David Moberg. The series has been made possible by a grant from the Joseph Aidlin Foundation.*

**By David Moberg**

AUSTIN, MN

**T**HE GEO. A. HORMEL CO., FOUNDED here in 1891, in many ways offers contrast to the rough-and-tumble history of the meatpacking industry. Although a former Wobbly led workers in one of the nation's first sit-down strikes in 1933 to win recognition of their union, Hormel has long practiced a paternalistic, benevolent capitalism.

The founder's son, Jay, is still remembered as someone who shook every worker's hand on Christmas eve, instituted a guaranteed annual wage and emphasized production quality, a stable workforce and labor-management cooperation long before the Japanese offered such a model.

In 1948 he set up the Hormel Foundation, which holds 45.6 percent of the corporation's stock, specifically to provide charitable support for the Austin community and to vote their stock "with the same interests which Father or I would have in mind; namely, the protection of the integrity of this business in behalf of the community which is dependent on it." Hormel was also instrumental during the Depression in bailing out the local Austin bank, now part of the five-state First Bank System and a key ally of Hormel.

The result—until recently—was a stable business-community-worker partnership. Many of today's employees are third- or fourth-generation Hormel workers. The town reflects that in its air of solidity and *gemutlich* neighborliness. But with competition and changes in the industry, Hormel—and Austin—began to shrink, dropping its steer and sheep operations despite many earlier concessions by the union designed to save those jobs.

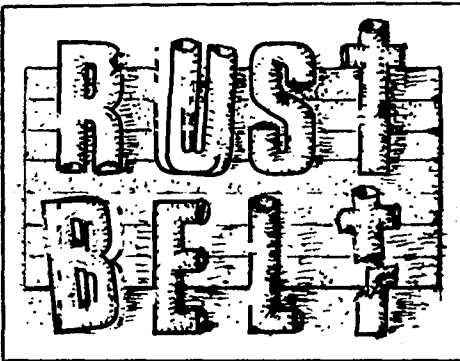
Indeed, Local P-9 President James Guyette says that for 16 of the past 21 years the local has granted concessions with questionable gain. In 1978 the company threatened to close all of its Austin plant unless the union would take wage cuts that would provide one-fifth of the \$100 million needed to build a new plant in Austin and agree to a seven-year contract that eliminated the right to strike or slow down, provided for a 20 percent boost in work speed, eliminated incentive pay and otherwise drastically revised the contract. Under the gun, the local agreed, thinking that in return it had a contractual pledge that its members' income would not decline as well as an agreement that any change in the industry master agreement would be adopted in Austin.

The new plant—which officially opened in 1982—was governed by a complex array of an old contract, a transition and new plant agreement, and then by the 1981 wage freeze and elimination of cost-of-living adjustments that Austin Hormel workers at first rejected, then accepted. The first paragraph in the summary of that agreement provided by the international union stated that "there will be no increase or reduction in rates for the balance of the present term of the Agreement and for the 1982-85 term of the Agreement."

But with the turmoil and wage-cutting in the industry, Hormel management in early 1984 told the local that the "me-too" clause in the new plant contract permitted them to institute wage and benefit cuts as soon as a pattern of lower pay was established. The local argued that the provision for following the master agreement had been intended only for improvements and that in any case there was no longer any clear master agreement. But when reductions at some Oscar Mayer plants occurred last year, the company claimed that those,

along with cuts at two other major meatpackers (Morrell and Swift), formed a pattern. Although it rejected givebacks, the local did offer to tie wages to profits in a way that would have more than repaid any company loss if profits fell below recent levels. Workers would have received a modest increase if profits grew. The company, Guyette said, took about 90 seconds to reject his plan as "not enough."

Since the 1981 agreement had provided for either side to reopen discussion of wages and for the right to strike on Sept. 1, 1984,



the company pressed the international union for Hormel chain concessions, having earlier in the year won concessions at two Hormel plants by punishing workers with mass layoffs. Guyette, 36, a third-generation Hormel worker who had long opposed concessions, had been elected president in a lackluster election in January 1984. He argued within the Hormel chain against any concessions, especially extending talks to benefits as well as wages. Also, given the complex and unique contract situation and Hormel's insistence that the Austin local still did not have the right to strike, the Austin local submitted its grievances to arbitration. Meanwhile, the other Hormel locals in Iowa and Nebraska accepted a pay cut from \$10.69 to \$9 an hour, which would rise to \$10 by September of

this year—as well as major benefit cuts.

Hormel, making its own interpretation of the master agreement after concessions at some Oscar Mayer plants were agreed to or forced upon, cut Austin wages in October by 23 percent to \$8.25 an hour. Although an arbitrator ruled that the company could make changes based on the "me-too" clause, he later raised the rate to \$8.75 an hour (rising to \$9.25 on July 20). The local, which did not have a copy of the 1981 agreement (although in force, it had never been signed), got a copy and discovered that the language prohibiting reduction in rates was not there, despite the summary and despite such language being included in other company contracts modified at the same time. They demanded an investigation by their international union, but the request was rejected.

#### Corporate campaign.

Many Hormel workers were ready to strike in October, when Guyette invited veteran labor organizer Ray Rogers to discuss the possibility of a "corporate campaign" with the members. Rogers argued against an immediate strike and sketched out a plan that would involve attacking the financial and other supports for Hormel, in particular First Bank, which had three interlocking directors with Hormel (two bank executives on Hormel's board, Hormel President Richard Knowlton on the bank's) and deep financial ties. In successfully fighting J.P. Stevens, Rogers, now 40 years old, discovered the power of getting corporate and financial executives divided and of making forces behind an anti-union company suffer as well.

After hearing his plan, workers voted by a wide margin to assess themselves \$3 a week to pay for costs of \$20,000 a month plus expenses for the modestly paid Corporate Campaign, Inc. staff. Although a strike

## MEATPACKING

# Hormel workers headed for showdown at Minnesota plant



was a potential weapon in the plan, an arbitrator ruled that Local P-9 could not strike until the new plant agreement expired. It was a further, frustrating blow. In the local's eyes, it was getting the worst of all its contracts: the concessions of the 1981 agreement were valid. (They extended beyond the wage freeze and obviously altered the supposedly unalterable new plant agreement.) But there was no guarantee against a reduction of rates, as they had believed. And on the issues of the right to

## With worsening conditions and continuing concessions, the union local has become a "powder keg."

strike or the company's right to impose cuts, the earlier contract prevailed.

Although P-9 leaders felt that the local would be allowed to go its own way, in spite of the international's disagreement with its strategy, shortly before Christmas the national packinghouse bargaining committee was hastily called to Chicago. After hearing from the Austin local and Rogers, they went ahead with what was apparently a predetermined decision: formally refusing to endorse the P-9 corporate campaign and instead announcing a boycott and organizing drive directed at ConAgra/Armour, whose low wages at \$6 an hour were described as the real threat to the union. According to packinghouse director Lewie Anderson, the Armour campaign does not appear to have geared up, partly because a lawsuit trying to restore former workers' jobs made it hard to organize the newly hired workers who are there.

Anderson maintains that high unemployment, the recession and the barrage of corporate assaults—from plant closings to bankruptcy or spin-off of plants to new firms—made it impossible to preserve the master agreement in the pork industry. "It just gutted us," he said. "At the height of the struggle in 1983 we almost lost this industry."

From Memphis to Kansas, thousands of workers would show up, applying for jobs at \$5 an hour. This undermined the union's power to resist. In response, the union—despite its official opposition to concessions—began a policy of "retrenchment," pulling back to a wage rate around \$8 an hour as an alternative to sliding even lower. Anderson's strategy is to try to bring up the low-wage plants—whether big firms like Armour or the small, regional packers who have undermined pork industry wages much as IBP did in beef—then try to bring everyone up together.

Anderson argues for the classic industrial union policy of uniform wages "If you're going to have a national rate that takes labor out of competition and the packers have to compete on know-how and technology, that works well," he said.

"But what happens when some imbalance takes place? What do packers do?" he asked. "They find a way to get out from paying the substantially higher wage costs. A national rate preserves jobs, preserves established bargaining positions for the majority, preserves stability. When we move away from the national rate, up or down, we get instability, replacement of higher-paying jobs by lower-paying."

If the Austin local succeeds in its demands, which he does not believe they will, Anderson predicts that Hormel will subcontract work and close at least part of the plant. Even if such a move were more expensive in the short term, the company might do it because "in the long term their goal would be to smash that local," he said.

Hormel recently acquired a small non-union plant of Dold Foods and began acquiring FDL Foods, which is paying only \$7.75 an hour under an inferior union con-

tract. It also has extra capacity at other locals that will be at a \$10 an hour rate by this fall.

Clearly much of Anderson's argument with Local P-9 hinges on his conviction that the company will shut down at least part of the plant, even though it is the brand-new showcase of the firm and the industry. If it fails, only P-9 members are hurt. That is much different from a local that undercuts the contract, thereby hurting other workers.

But what if P-9 succeeds? "If they were able, we'd have to say we were wrong," he said. Meanwhile, Anderson continues to argue that "Local P-9 has chosen the wrong target at the wrong time. We cannot raise the roof unless our foundation is solid."

Yet Local P-9 insists that the union needs a "two-pronged strategy," defending its contracts wherever possible and bringing up the bottom at the same time. Anderson's view is influenced by several years of losing battles and the near-collapse of the union. But Guyette and members of Local P-9 see that Hormel is already profitable: its 2 percent return on sales is one of the highest and twice what would be considered good elsewhere. It has large capital reserves and an ability to acquire other firms and expand into new products, such as catfish. Even with heavy capital expenditures, it has produced returns on stockholder equity of 10.4 percent (1984) to 12 percent consistently over the past four years, almost always above the industry average. Stock analysts predict even rosier returns within two years. Hormel's modest problems in still-profitable 1984 were less a result of high wages than a critical miscalculation of likely hog supplies and inventories. Employees can't understand why they should reduce their living standards to help a firm that is already very healthy.

More than that, Austin workers are angry at what Guyette calls the "betrayal" by the company. Hormel fails to take into account the contribution workers made to build the new Austin plant, he says, or the very high pace of work, which the union maintains is 20 percent above the industry norm. Business agent Peter Winkels describes the plant as increasingly under the control of hard-driving time-study engineers and "Hormelized" equipment that is run at rates above manufacturer's specifications. That has led Austin serious injury rates to soar by 119 percent since 1981 to a rate above the already high industry average, despite the introduction of more automated technology that in theory should have made work safer. Now, instead of workers re-

to have a new plant that employees helped pay for but that they would not be paid less. We took our monies out of our paycheck to build the plant, and now the company says it doesn't want to live up to the bargain.

"If the newest plant in the industry takes a cut in wages, then the other plants are going to say they can't compete," he argues. "If concessions are going to stop, then they are going to have to stop at the most profitable company with the newest



First Bank has been targeted by Local P-9 because of its relationship with Hormel.

plant. We might as well defend at \$10.69 as at \$10, \$9 or \$8. When you grant a profitable corporation concessions, it just gives them money to go buy other operations to play against you. We're being accused of leaving the industry pattern when there is no industry pattern."

What about the threat of a plant closing? Even now Hormel talks about getting out of the more dangerous, less profitable slaughtering end of the business, he said. "The fact remains that the company will decide if it wants to remain in the pork business. But it's clear to us that concessions are not the path to job security."

Guyette argues that the union must go on the offensive, demanding corporate reinvestment, gaining a greater role in company decisionmaking and setting the terms of the labor-management debate rather than reacting to management's offensive. "Workers are forced to pay for sins of management but get no input into managerial decisions," he said. "Maybe that's where we've got to head. I could save this company \$1 million

they've got an international they have to fight along with the company," said Guyette, who is a hard-working, even-tempered leader. "The international is just as determined to undermine our campaign as the company is. They're fearful of us winning. They're concerned that we'll show there is a way of fighting back, that there is a way other than to accept concessions. They'll be put in the light that they should be doing the job that Ray is doing for us. If one group can pull it off without the

international's help, other locals may do the same."

After months of mutual dickering over the arrangements, Anderson finally was invited to address a local meeting in April. But after five hours, few people apparently were persuaded. Forced by the international to take a second vote on the Corporate Campaign assessment, the members passed the levy again in June with more support than before, by a two-thirds margin. Given a chance to vote once again on the Hormel chain concessions from the fall of 1984—which they had earlier rejected by a 92 percent vote—P-9 members turned it down by a four-to-one margin.

In addition to letters and leaflets to P-9 members, the international has mobilized other meatpacking local leaders to oppose P-9's campaign. Yet that appears to have backfired to some extent as rank-and-file members of several locals, including Fremont, Neb., and Beloit, Wisc., signed petitions or passed resolutions in support of P-9, repudiating their local leaders. (Workers at Beloit were laid off for a week when they refused to rescind their statement of support, according to Guyette.)

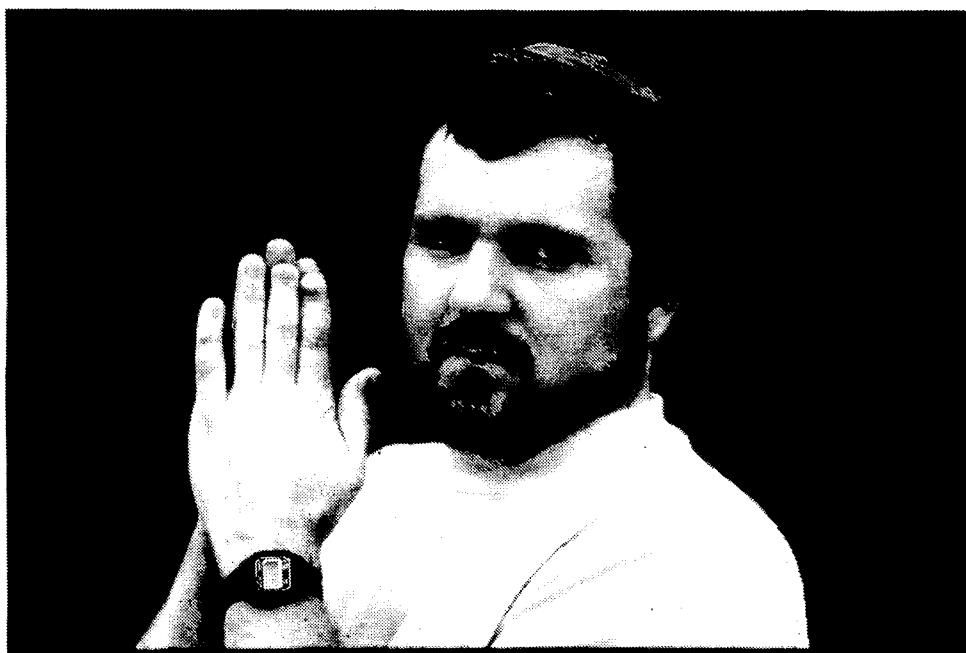
The Austin workers have drawn support from many other unions in the upper Midwest, but the response has been muffled as high-level representatives of the UFCW, the AFL-CIO and other unions, including the UAW, have tried to stop gestures of support or reporting about the P-9 campaign.

"There's an awful lot of union leaders who say off the record that this kind of thing is really needed, and they feel for the plight of the Hormel workers," says Drew Mendelson, editor of the St. Paul-based *Union Advocate*. "If only there weren't a fight between the local and international, there would be massive support for it."

Argues Guyette: "Labor has to come forward with new strategies. The thing that beats most unions is they let companies set the ground rules for dispute. Also, too many officials see involvement of the rank and file as a threat to their position. We see the opposite," he said. "An involved, intelligent rank and file is what we want. That's what gives us strength. Locals too often go into negotiations with the hope that some guy from Washington will fly in and save him. A fighter trains for a fight. Unions have to train for negotiations and what happens if negotiations break down. It's the unpreparedness of unions that beats them."

The trainer in this case is Rogers, a muscular, intense and thoroughly confident man who still works out in the gym and,

*Continued on following page*



Hormel worker Ed Frein lost the tips of two fingers working on an automatic stuffing machine.

garding their Hormel job as a lifetime career, there's an 18 percent annual turnover. And the intense pace has led to many repetitive trauma injuries, such as the carpal tunnel syndrome that leaves victims' arms and wrists permanently weakened.

### Powder keg.

With worsening conditions and continuing concessions that bring only new demands, the local has become, according to Guyette, "a powder keg." "We feel we've been betrayed and deceived in the agreements we've made. The intent of the parties in 1978 was

a year by just putting half of the people stealing from me back to work producing for me."

Citing various business press descriptions, Guyette claims that Hormel is top-heavy with supervisors and management. In Austin, there are now 1,500 production workers and 200 supervisory workers at the plant, plus another 500 people in the corporate office. Elsewhere Hormel employs about 4,500 more workers.

"What's ironic to me is in other places you've got to convince people to fight. But here you've got people ready to fight, and



Continued from preceding page

ironically, considering the cause he's working for, is a vegetarian). That may also be the reason for some of the official union hostility toward P-9. Rogers is brash and outspoken, not given to bureaucratic deference and the union-organization-man mentality. As a result, some very powerful labor officials deeply dislike him, even though they pay lip service to his ideas or attempt to implement their own "corporate campaigns" (although usually without the crucial Rogers' ingredient, a mobilized membership).

Rogers, Ed Allen and other Corporate Campaign staffers have organized P-9 members to form diverse and active committees, to bring spouses into a United Support Group, to leaflet numerous other meatpacking plants in the area or the Hormel chain, to go door to door in Austin in the freezing winter with one of several special editions of the local's newspaper, to pressure the company and First Bank at their annual meetings (Hormel moved to Atlanta to minimize the effect), to march with banners at First Bank branches, Hormel headquarters and other targets, and to stage mass rallies. Although they do not formally talk of boycotting the bank, First Austin bank

35 years old, sees the campaign not only as a winning strategy but also as a personal salvation. "The union is just adrift in an ocean and has no place to go," he said. "Maybe it was the Reagan administration and economic trends that led to retrenchment in 1981. The union's original plan was to bring the lower up to the higher paid, but they found it easier to bring the higher down. I can't just blame the international. It's the Reagan administration. When they broke PATCO it was a green light for companies to go after labor."

"To be honest," he continued, "if I wasn't involved, I'd go crazy. This way I know what's going on, and I can contribute to the cause. I used to lose sleep, worry over what could happen. I used to get real frustrated and downright angry. With Ray Rogers I have a different outlook. I don't have hard feelings toward the company."

Building that determination and confidence through the actions of the past months will strengthen the local if its current negotiations end in a strike (the contract expires August 9, according to a recent arbitrator's decision that once more went against the local union, which had argued that it expires August 31).

In a planning meeting, union members ticked off all the possible targets at which

the community to stop possible strikebreakers, who come not just because people want a job but because public opinion turns against strikers. For every casualty they inflict on us, we're going to inflict multiple casualties on them."

Community loyalties are important. Many people in Austin have felt that Hormel workers were overpaid. Also, with roughly one-fourth of the town's jobs directly dependent on Hormel and more on the Foundation, people fear a shutdown. (Despite Hormel's benevolence, many believe the company also has interfered with the location of other industries in Austin except for a carton and now-closed can plant that served Hormel's needs.) The local press has been hostile to Local P-9.

But the union's campaign has had an effect. After the city council voted to ask the local to sever ties with the Corporate Campaign, several hundred workers came to the next council meeting. By the next meeting, the council was petitioning the Hormel Foundation to meet with the union.

With its giant block of stock and historic mandate, the Foundation is vulnerable to the corporate campaign. That is especially true since it was reorganized under legal pressure in 1980 to include as a majority on its board representatives of the city and the main local beneficiaries of the foundation. How could they fail to use their power to preserve their city if Hormel threatened it?

Some community links have already been formed, for example, with citizen action groups and farmers angry at First Bank for foreclosing on farms and failing to reinvest in depressed local economies. Some merchants still have signs in their stores indicating support for P-9.

Harold Mullenmeister, owner of The Bootery Shoestore for 30 years, formed a group called CARE that worked through the churches to encourage the two sides to come together. "I've got more friends in P-9 than in the company," he said one day at the close of business. "We need both. If they split, it would be a terrible thing. But none of us wishes they'd take a pay cut. The more they make, the better for all of us."

In theory, Hormel executives claim that they agree. "We think this situation in the industry is tragic," Hormel Vice President and General Counsel Charles Nyberg said. "The great American dream is based on a family having not only sustenance but enough to educate the kids, have a respectable home, a decent car to drive. We think it's desirable for them to have an income that permits it. We want to see the downward spiral of wages stop some place."

But apparently not at Hormel. Nyberg said the company would accept different contracts as long as total labor costs did not exceed \$18.50 an hour. Yet that would mean concessions of at least \$2.50 an hour from the old contract. The union would likely revive its old offer of wages tied to profits, which could form the basis of a compromise, if the company gives.

"We're not pleading poverty," Nyberg said. "It isn't corporate greed. It's just com-

mon sense." Their goal is 16 percent return on investment. It may be a simple question of power whether they get 16 percent or the workers get \$10.69.

Meanwhile, Hormel plans to expand into more lucrative food business—like barbecue sauce—and, as Nyberg said, "we continually analyze our own cutting and slaughtering," where competition is not keen. Although its strong brand name and modern plants permit it to remain profitable, Nyberg held out the veiled threat that the company's response to collective bargaining might involve "all kinds of steps, including adjusting the size of the Austin plant, adjusting the schedule or adjusting the size of the workforce."

As the showdown in Austin unfolds, negotiations are also underway for other packinghouse workers under national contracts. The national union has said it is seeking minimum wages of \$8.50 to \$8.75 an hour, improving safety, establishing common contract expiration dates and reducing the length of new-hires' lower wage scales. Anderson has also talked of restoring cost-of-living adjustments and enforcing the prohibition on mid-term concessions.

In light of its opposition to concessions and determination to restore wages, it is a shame that the international union has not responded to the militancy and initiative of Local P-9 by attempting to spread it throughout the industry. Whatever their fears about a partial plant closing, whatever the merits of a uniform national wage, it is clear that they have an opportunity to win with a determined, involved local that epitomizes what union leaders have been saying they need. Much of the strategy in Austin could be used at locals everywhere, greatly increasing the union's clout against ConAgra/Armour or any other employer.

In no other hard-hit Midwestern industry is it as clear that workers' lives are being torn to shreds not because of some change in the international division of labor, not because of better products made elsewhere and not because of a strong dollar or a weak local economy. In the meatpacking industry, the trauma to workers and communities is purely a result of a sustained corporate attack—buttressed by economic trends—that has been powerful enough to overcome the workers' main defense, their union. In response, Ray Rogers is fond of saying, you can only fight power with power. ■ *Because of a production error, the July 24 article on the Rath Packing Company experiment in worker ownership failed to identify the company's location in Waterloo, Iowa.*

Anyone interested in Rath or worker ownership may want to read the interview with Rath union leaders in the Spring 1985 issue of Labor Research Review, available for \$4 from the Midwest Center for Labor Research, 3411 W. Diversey, Chicago, IL 60647. The entire issue is devoted to "Workers as Owners" and includes reports on Hyatt-Clark, Weirton (by Staughton Lynd) and other worker-owned businesses, in addition to a discussion on Employee Stock Ownership Plans and a debate over worker ownership as a labor strategy.

**"If there's a strike, we will turn those 1,500 workers and their families into a multimillion dollar political and economic force," said Ray Rogers, veteran labor organizer.**

deposits were down by \$15 million in the first quarter of this year. (The bank denies that any of that is a result of bad publicity.)

#### The time to stop giving.

Workers and their families have been energized. "My husband used to come home, and I'd ask what happened at work, and he'd say, 'You wouldn't understand,'" said Carole Apold, who is active in the United Support Group. "Now we can sit down and just talk. I understand what the men go through over there." (Actually, about one-fourth of the workers are women.)

Hormel worker Pete Kennedy, 36, a college graduate who has been helping research the Hormel Foundation, said, "Generally, the consensus is this is the time to stop giving back. Parity at the bottom is not an answer I can see. My main reason for going with the corporate campaign is that it's a definite program. This shows some goals and means of getting those goals. Every other one we pursued, we were finding no answers. It's really mystifying that the international should find us so threatening. The only reason I can think is we're doing something they should have been doing, and they're afraid we'll be successful."

Harold "Bud" Miller, a youthful-looking

they would aim if a strike occurs. "Anything Hormel touches, we'll touch them," Larry Wilson insisted. "Any place that has a Hormel product will be hit." That includes stores selling Spam, Cure 81 Hams, Dinty Moore Stews, Frank'n'Stuff hot dogs or other Hormel food products; Burger King and other fast food chains that buy from Hormel; First Bank; local philanthropies; Hormel livestock feeds and much more.

"If there's a strike, we will turn those 1,500 workers and their families into a multimillion dollar political and economic force," Rogers said with great enthusiasm. "I feel the bank and the company would be crazy if they ever allowed it to go that far—to a strike—and let the country see such a powerful thing develop."

What if they were to achieve their goal—at least the restoration of their old contract—and the company retaliated with a partial shutdown? "Whatever they do, First Bank can't pick up and move," he replied. "You raise the stakes so high for First Bank and the Hormel Foundation that they won't move. You have to focus on capital and the financial power behind the company. Also, what we're doing is building a situation where workers in the other plants would be sympathetic and wouldn't accept a transfer of production. We will appeal to

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By William Gasperini

## ULWAS, NICARAGUA

A FLEET OF DUMPTRUCKS MOVED slowly through a pine forest, carrying families atop piles of furniture and clothing as well as sacks of food. Eventually the trucks pulled into a clearing around charred posts, the only indication a village once stood there. Although some adults clapped as they arrived here, most stared impassively, seemingly overwhelmed by the enormous task before them: rebuilding their community from scratch.

The 200 Miskito Indian residents of Ulwas had come home, three and a half years after they had been forcibly evacuated from this place of the Coco River that forms the border with Honduras 400 miles north-east of Managua. The Sandinista government had taken them to a resettlement call-

ledges that "cultural insensitivity" to the traditional ways of the Miskitos had inflamed an already delicate situation. The Sandinistas also admit many abuses occurred during the evacuation including random killings by government soldiers and burning of villages to prevent the *contras* from using them. Whatever the reasons, the evacuation effectively tore the Miskito nation in two. An estimated 20,000 fled into Honduras and 15,000 moved to other parts of Nicaragua, including 10,000 to Tasba Pri.

The Miskitos never adapted to the poor soils and farming cooperatives that characterized life in Tasba Pri, wanting only to return to the river that provided ample fish and fertile soil for crops and fruit trees along its banks. And now they are doing just that, due to a tentative agreement between the Sandinistas and MISURA, the larger of two Miskito rebel groups fighting the Managua government. The Sandinistas no longer

## NICARAGUA

# First Miskito group returns to homeland

ed "Tasba Pri"—Free Land—100 miles inland, deep in a tropical forest and far from the river that for centuries had been their source of livelihood.

In early 1982, newly-formed rebel *contra* groups began attacking villages dotting the banks of the river, kidnapping and killing residents in many places. The Managua government then made the controversial decision to evacuate the entire region, blaming "CIA destabilization" for the increasing violence.

Although the threat from the *contra* groups in Honduras was real, the Sandinistas received sharp criticism for the evacuation as opponents charged the move was to afford better control over the Miskitos. The indigenous group had resisted efforts by the Sandinistas to bring in "block defense committees" and other changes that were occurring on the Pacific side of the country in the wake of the 1979 revolution. This resistance reflected the historical distance between the Atlantic coast population and the rest of Nicaragua.

Today the government itself acknow-

refer to the Miskito rebels as *contras*, but as "armed groups," drawing a distinction between them and the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN) battling government forces on the Pacific side of the country.

Although the military situation in the sparsely populated northeastern region remains tense, a dozen "cleaning brigades" returned to the river in June to chop brush and prepare for their families' return. Yet it will take months, perhaps years, to repair the almost total destruction of the 40 towns and villages scheduled to be resettled before December. While eight towns in the interior have already been resettled, Ulwas was the first community located on the river to be resettled, and not a single dwelling remains of the original village.

As he scanned the ruins of his town, resident Dilio Mitchell said, "There is much work to be done. We are happy to be back, but also sad to see our town is not here anymore." Behind him several men helped unload sheets of zinc roofing brought from Tasba Pri.

While the government has promised food

## Contra activities intensify

Nicaraguans once again are reeling from the impact of a particularly brutal ambush against civilians. On July 27 a *contra* command force attacked three trucks carrying mothers to visit their sons serving in the army at a remote mountain camp in Matagalpa. Six mothers, a teenage girl and a male coordinator of the trip died. Another body was burned beyond recognition after the truck caught fire.

Survivors reported shouting, "We're civilians." But the attackers responded, "We're with the FDN," the main anti-Sandinista group, and continued firing.

"They were like animals," said Alma Sanchez, who was shot in the elbow as she scrambled off the truck. "They knew we were civilians. Soldiers accompanying the truck held off the *contra* forces until reinforcements arrived.

Survivors said most in the group opposed having a military escort, but others claimed the massacre would have been worse had the soldiers not been present.

At a funeral service in Leon several days later, an emotional President Daniel Ortega called on the consciences of U.S. Congress members who voted in favor of funding the *contras*, saying that the U.S. government was "behaving worse than Hitler." Shortly after, several children of one victim collapsed at their mother's graveside and had to be taken away by medics.

The ambush came as *contra* activity

has increased sharply in northern areas, particularly around the city of Esteli, 120 kilometers from Managua. On July 28, 29 soldiers died in an ambush just three miles outside the city. A major battle followed, involving helicopters and heavy artillery.

Military officials claim that the city of 60,000 is not threatened and that the increased activity has more propaganda value than military. "They need to show the world that they are strong and justify the expense to the U.S. administration," said army spokesperson Rosa Pasos. Yet within days of the ambush, two bridges on the pan-American highway outside the city of 60,000 suffered heavy damage from explosive charges that blew large holes in the pavement but did not cause structural damage.

Hitting the bridges is a new tactic, but this is not the first time Esteli has been targeted. In October 1984 *contra* forces carried out numerous actions close to the "ciudad heroica," known for its combative spirit ever since the 1978-79 revolution. According to residents, however, this new phase is far worse, as the continued support approved by Congress recently has boosted the *contras'* morale.

"They got their oats, and now they are letting us know," said a Swiss agricultural adviser who has lived in Esteli since 1979.

-W.G.

## IN THE WORLD



The government has promised food aid for 10 months to the Miskitos redeveloping their devastated homes, but cannot provide sufficient materials for all the rebuilding.

aid for 10 months, it cannot provide sufficient materials—especially tools, nails and wood—for all of the communities and has appealed to international relief organizations to help. Residents can bring the zinc roofing and whatever else they wish from their Tasba Pri homes, but officials say transport problems will limit what can be brought. The project is estimated at \$10 million.

In neighboring Waspam, the former capital and chief trading center of the Miskito nation, a collapsing church, a destroyed Texaco gas station and the ruins of a high school are all that remain of the once bustling town of 3,000. The forest has retaken the urban area, providing ample breeding ground for the only residents since the evacuation, millions of mosquitos.

One family has already moved back to Waspam, along with 40 men who came in mid-June for initial land-clearing. Onofre Suazo returned to his homeland with his ailing elderly mother, who said she wanted to die near her cherished river. "We will never leave again," Suazo said outside the ruins of the high school gymnasium where his family sleeps under mosquito nets and plastic sheets. "We are back to make Waspam again, and no one will ever tell us to go," he said, holding a machete and swatting several mosquitos.

On a wall nearby someone had scrawled "Long live the Indian guerrillas who will never sell out or surrender," which, ironically, is the same phrase the Sandinistas use to describe their confrontation with the U.S., "*Ni se vende ni se rinde.*"

As the clean-up process continues, the uncertainty of the cease-fire hangs in the air as thickly as the heavy humidity characteristic of the current rainy season. Six members of one brigade in a remote village died July 15 when a mine exploded in a field where they were working. It was unclear whether the device had been planted by the government or MISURA. Local Interior Ministry Commander Jose Gonzalez said government crews have deactivated

most mines placed along the river during the three years the area was a military free-fire zone, but warned clean-up crews some might still be in place. The village where the accident occurred has long been under MISURA control, according to Gonzalez.

One faction of MISURA has disagreed with the accords allowing the return, calling the process "another Sandinista trick." The military commander who led the negotia-

"There is much work to be done. We are happy to be back, but also sad to see our town is not here anymore," said one resident.

tions with Managua, Edgard Panting, died in a MISURA camp June 22 under still unclear circumstances. Evidence indicates he was assassinated by this rival faction, led by Steadman Fagoth, the mercurial leader who directed the 1981 "Red Christmas" attacks along the river, which precipitated the evacuation. In mid-June Fagoth met in Miami with Brooklyn Rivera, head of the rival group MISURASATA, where they and other leaders reportedly agreed to hold a "general assembly" in Honduras sometime in August to determine future actions. Rivera had held negotiations with Managua until talks broke off in May. The apparent unity among these leaders, and MISURA's continuing—albeit often strained—links with the FDN, raises uncer-

Continued on page 22



# South Africa

Continued from page 3

tion is crumbling around the edges. I think they feel they are losing control."

Since last September the UDF has intensified its campaign to boycott community council elections and force black administrators to resign. Opposition to rent and school fee hikes was used to rally popular support. Of the 34 black local authorities established as part of the new tricameral parliament scheme set up in 1983, a UDF survey found that only five still functioned by June this year, according to Mohammed Valli, UDF general secretary for the Transvaal region. By June some 150 community councillors had resigned, at least five had been killed and nearly 100 of their homes and businesses had been destroyed by fire or stoning. The homes of more than 300 black policemen have been similarly gutted.

Black local authorities are "under a state of siege," Valli said during an interview before he went into hiding. "The state has lost its ability to extract taxes or rents from those people. Black rejection of government authority is becoming better organized and spreading around the country."

Efforts to sow "ungovernability" take many forms. Residents of New Brighton township outside Port Elizabeth have begun to throw their garbage onto the paved roads to protest the lack of popular control over community services.

At the funeral in Cradock, the Rev. Allan Boesak, vice-chairman of the South African Council of Churches and a co-founder of the UDF, called on blacks to extend the week-old consumer boycott in Port Elizabeth and Cradock to other areas. The boycotts have caused a virtual panic among white businessmen who say they fear that if blacks ever become able to coordinate the withholding of their purchasing and labor power, they could sink the nation's already depressed and sanctions-battered

economy. Under the emergency powers the police can shut down shops owned by non-whites, which they assume will present blacks with a choice between buying goods from whites or starving.

It seemed symbolic that the country's leading activists were assembled in Cradock to mourn a murdered UDF leader when word of the crackdown first reached them. Cradock symbolized resistance. The entire community council, created by the Black Local Authorities Act of 1983 as a way to develop reliable blacks to administer the townships on behalf of the white government, resigned en masse. Cradock, the Cradock Residents Association, took its place as a self-proclaimed "people's council." Cradock's founder, Matthew Goniwe, led militant youths to the councillors' barricaded homes after they resigned and removed the screens from their windows, publicly welcoming them back into the black community.

These developments undoubtedly disturbed Pretoria, since they directly advanced the ANC's declared strategy to render the townships "ungovernable" by first forcing black police and other "collaborators" to resign, and then to turn black areas into "no-go areas" for white authority (see *In These Times*, June 26).

## Goniwe's murder.

When Goniwe was dismissed as acting headmaster of the local high school late last year and then put into solitary confinement for six months, students staged a 15-month school boycott that spread throughout the Eastern Cape. By June the government appeared ready to capitulate. Despite assurances by Cradock's conservative member of parliament that it would never happen, Goniwe's reappointment had been all but formalized when he and the other three Cradock officials disappeared during the night of June 27.

Five days later Goniwe reappeared as a charred, mutilated corpse with a broken hand, missing fingers and multiple stab wounds, according to the undertaker.

Another of the four victims, Fort Calata, grandson of an ANC founder, had one hand chopped off. Family and friends said the mutilations appeared a crude attempt to make the murders appear to be ritual killings attributable to the often-violent feud between the UDF and the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), the leading Black Consciousness group that appears to have a far smaller and diffuse following than the UDF.

Goniwe had reportedly promised not to stop the car that night except on the order of uniformed police. And a forensic expert employed by an attorney for the families ruled out after an investigation that the car had been forcibly stopped. This led UDF spokespersons to speculate that the car was ordered to halt and the killings occurred sometime thereafter. They also theorize that a right-wing death squad is operating, with the complicity of the state, in the Port Elizabeth area.

The state has vehemently denied knowledge of death squads or any police complicity in the disappearance or deaths of UDF leaders. Shortly after a police manhunt found the four bodies in a field outside Port Elizabeth, the police offered a \$500 reward for information about the culprits. A broad spectrum of black leaders, however, appear convinced the government at least offered information or protection to the killers.

"We cannot be so sure they [right-wing death squads] are not getting support from the authorities," Boesak told the funeral crowd that had earlier erupted with delight at his late arrival and carried him and Beyers Naude, general secretary of the SACC, in on their shoulders. (Bishop Desmond Tutu missed his ride from the airport and the funeral.)

"Only a few people in the UDF office knew of the meeting or that they were going back that evening. The only others who could have known are those with sophisticated listening equipment, and we all know who they are," Boesak said.

"The so-called UDF-AZAPO feud is a well-orchestrated scheme on the part of the

state that is being used as a smokescreen to terrorize our leadership," claims the UDF's Valli.

Police spokespersons have said the missing three leaders of PEBCO, another UDF affiliate partially responsible for the consumer boycott and other resistance around Port Elizabeth, were probably abducted by AZAPO supporters and deny any knowledge of their whereabouts since they disappeared sometime after leaving to meet someone at the airport on May 9. The day after the Cradock funeral, however, the families produced a witness who works at the airport and claims that he saw the PEBCO leaders hustled into a police vehicle by white plainclothes and uniformed police. A black man who exited from the plane they went to meet was also arrested, according to the man's affidavit, which was witnessed by Brian Bishop, president of the Civil Rights League of Capetown. The witness asked that his name not be used. Since the police deny taking the men into custody, the courts have refused to take further action.

At the funeral, the country's leading clergymen reacted with exasperation and sadness to news of the impending state of emergency. "The whole world must hear that if we must bury men like Matthew Goniwe then I say this country is digging its own grave. I stand here gripped by a terrible sadness and anger. Yet again this government has shown its determination to be totally ruthless in order to maintain its power," said Boesak.

Beyers Naude, a white Afrikaner who is general secretary of the SACC, said, "No state of emergency is going to solve anything unless all political prisoners are released. For God's sake, before this country goes up in flames, heed the cry of our people."

Michael Calabrese is an attorney and journalist who in late July finished working on human rights cases for 10 weeks as a visiting fellow at the Center for Applied Legal Studies in Johannesburg. He received funding from the Stanford University Chapel.

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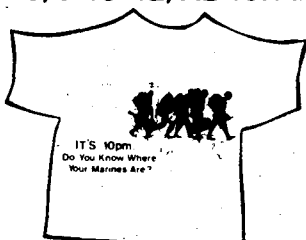
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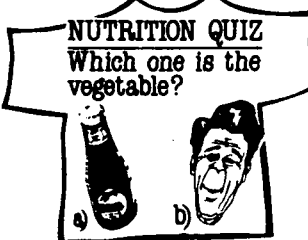
Einstein - "Imagination is more important than knowledge" white ink on black



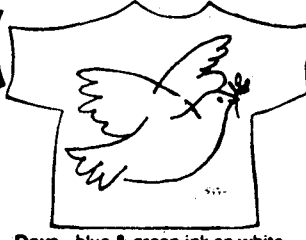
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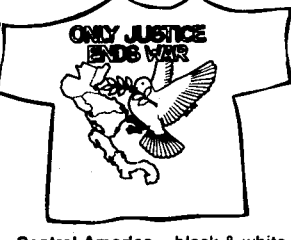
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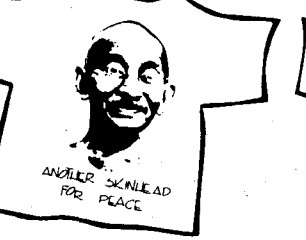
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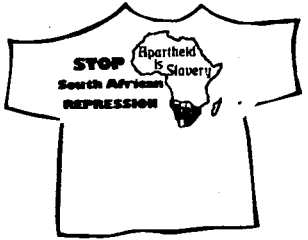
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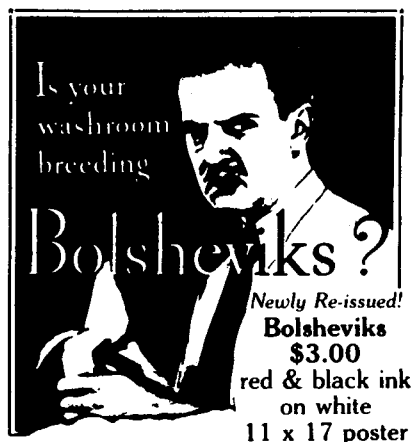


Join the Army - white ink on blue, tan ink on olive drab 50/50

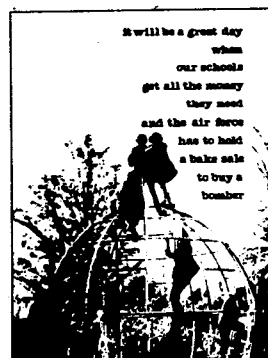


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*The Guatemalan military instills a pervasive state of fear and terror in the Indian highlands.*

spies everywhere. Before what might have become a fistfight now results in someone denouncing someone as a Communist and getting that person killed."

"It's like the Phoenix program in Vietnam," says a source in the highlands. "It was set up to get the guerrilla infrastructure but ended up used by people to get even for women, for land, for a tortilla stand. It becomes generalized terror."

And with the army in charge, fighting a persisting, albeit weakened insurgency, with terror as a key counter-insurgency tactic, few observers here hold much hope for human rights improvements. In the cities political killings and disappearances are also continuing, with the university and trade unionists taking the brunt. But the most shocking case was the murder four months ago of two leaders of Guatemala's only human rights advocacy group, the Mutual Support Group (GAM).

On March 30 Hector Gomez was abducted on his way home from a meeting of the six-person GAM directorate. Two days later his tortured body was discovered with his teeth smashed out and his tongue cut off.

Four days later Rosario Godoy de Cuevas, one of the initial founders of GAM, was murdered, along with her two-year-old daughter and her brother. Although they had left for the supermarket their auto was found rolled over in a gully an hour south of their home. The official police report said the cause of the deaths was trauma resulting from the impact of the crash, but independent doctors who investigated the scene told the family that the cause was asphyxiation—they had been strangled to death and the car pushed into the gully to make it appear an accident.

Soon after the deaths Archbishop Prospero Penados del Barrio denounced them as "assassinations." Shortly thereafter, he began receiving threats on his life. Then two of the remaining members of the GAM directorate fled the country after also receiving death threats. The Mutual Support Group plans to increase pressure on the military government to account for their disappeared family members before the scheduled change to civilian government in January.

#### Crime wave.

While political violence continues, Guatemala's economic crisis is fueling a crime wave of assaults and robberies. Although economically motivated, it is occurring in the context of a society where power has been based on force and where many former soldiers work as bodyguards and have access to weapons that they can use on off hours.

Despite the increase in violence, the Reagan administration is trying to increase aid to Guatemala. The country needs the aid desperately, since it recently mortgaged a third of its gold reserves to be able to purchase its next four-month supply of oil. The inflation rate, formerly negligible, is now estimated at 60-90 percent. The *quetzal*, which over the last two decades has been on a par with the U.S. dollar, has dropped to about three to the dollar and is expected to reach close to five by year's end.

In February the Reagan administration proposed \$80 million in aid to Guatemala, including \$10 million in military aid. Last year's \$300,000 in military training aid was the first since the cutoff of military aid in 1977. On July 10 of this year the House approved a bill for Latin American aid that would allot Guatemala \$45.5 million of economic aid and \$10.3 million of military aid. Yet the military aid is conditioned on the installation of a civilian government, human rights improvements and none of the money can be used in the "model village" projects that have been called "concentration camps" by critics. But considering the ease of circumventing aid conditions, as done in El Salvador, observers aren't optimistic about the aid creating major human rights improvements.

**Chris Norton** writes regularly from Central America.

## GUATEMALA

By Chris Norton

### GUATEMALA CITY

**T**HIS COUNTRY'S MILITARY GOVERNMENT is planning a transition to civilian rule in the midst of a serious economic crisis and continuing political killings that have earned Guatemala notoriety as the worst human rights violator in the hemisphere.

Desperately strapped for cash, the hardline Guatemalan government hopes that the upcoming elections—on November 3 with a runoff scheduled for December—and the transition to civilian rule will improve the country's image and open once again the pocketbooks of foreign investors and, most important, the U.S. Congress. Yet the persistence of institutionalized violence in both the countryside and the cities may make the public relations campaign increasingly difficult.

Advocates of renewed U.S. aid claim Guatemala has made improvements in human rights and argue that the aid would provide leverage to accelerate this trend. But the facts indicate otherwise. It's true that the number of killings has declined since the high point under Gen. Romeo Lucas Garcia, whose judicial police functioned as death squads. And it's true that by the end of 1982 the Guatemalan army had completed its annihilation campaign against the Indian villages linked to the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP)—a series of massacres that may have claimed upward of 25,000 deaths.

Although the numbers are down from their peaks, the violence is still sufficient to instill a pervasive state of fear and terror in the Indian highlands. "People are scared," said one Indian from the village of San Pedro Laguna on Lake Atitlan where residents believe the army killed the mayor and two military commissioners in the past year.

The community hit hardest by army violence has been the Indian municipality of Patzun. Since the beginning of the year, more than 100 Indians have been kidnapped or disappeared, according to local residents. Catholic Church documents list 68 confirmed dead.

Why the army has chosen to focus on Patzun is a question open to speculation. Some analysts believe that it is trying to counter attempts by the guerrillas to re-establish themselves in the area and reactivate their networks in the hamlets.

"Many of these hamlets were involved with the guerrillas in 1980 and 1981, but they weren't hurt that bad during the army's operations that hit Chimaltenango and the area north (Quiche and Huehuetenango)

## Political killings rise as economy worsens

really hard," says a priest who has lived in the highlands for many years. "There's been [guerrilla] activity in the area, and the army always takes the attitude that if the guerrillas are active, the people nearby must be collaborating."

Many victims in Patzun—and throughout the country—were members of the civil defense patrols. The government claims participation in these patrols is voluntary, but in reality it is required of almost all men in the highlands.

The guerrillas have said that they are infiltrating the civil defense patrols, which even the army admits contain Indians sympathetic to the guerrillas. One researcher speculates that the army may be retaliating against civil defense patrols it believes are not reporting guerrilla moves.

A pair of recent deaths in Patzun, however, were the work of the guerrillas. Two Ladino brothers-in-law who collaborated closely with the army were assassinated. The death of one, an organizer of a civil defense patrol and considered an army informer, was a relief to the local Indian community, according to several residents.

Although Patzun has borne the brunt of army violence, it isn't an isolated case. In the picturesque lakeside town of Santiago Atitlan, killings and disappearances began after guerrillas of the Organization of People in Arms (ORPA) came over from the coastal hills and burned down the town hall in January. Two deaths particularly shocked the community—those of a young Indian catechist and of a prominent Indian pharmacist, Salvador Sissay. Sissay was killed in his pharmacy on the evening of June 25.

Residents speculate that he might have been killed because two of his children are rumored to have links with the left and now reside outside Guatemala. Sissay apparently also had personal conflicts with the local *comisionado militar*—the military civilian agent in charge of organizing the civil patrols, recruiting for the army and identifying suspected "subversives." Three thousand marched in his funeral procession.

"Santiago Atitlan is considered by the army as being a center of the guerrillas," says a religious source familiar with the area. "They're trying to keep their thumb on the place, keep it under control and scare



*A gun shop sign in Guatemala City*

people. They're trying to show their power."

Throughout the highlands the army is the real power and civilian authorities are merely "decorative," as one priest put it. "If you want anything done you have to go to the head of the [military] zone."

#### Militarization of society.

Also key to the army's control are the civil defense patrols, the "poles of development" in the conflictive zones (centered around "model villages" similar to Vietnam's strategic hamlets) and an extensive network of spies and informers. Few observers believe the elections and a civilian government will affect army control of the countryside.

"The Ladinos (non-Indians of Spanish descent) tend to excuse the acts of the soldiers," says a priest working in the highlands. Ladinos interviewed tended to dismiss the army killings of Indian as inter-Indian conflicts caused by feuds or drunken brawls. "Life is hard for the Indian," said one Ladino. "It has less value."

"Certainly there is corruption, personal feuds, clashes of interest," notes a political analyst in the capital. "But now what you have in Guatemala is the complete militarization of society with not just the army everywhere, but civil defense patrols and





By Greg Mitchell

HIROSHIMA, JAPAN

**I**N IWAKUNI, A CITY 20 MILES SOUTH-west of here, lie two symbols of Japanese militarism, past and present. Each was created by the Japanese and recast by the U.S. One represents the inglorious fall of military power in Japan 40 years ago, the other its ascendancy today.

The past is encompassed in the person of Yoriko Hatanaka, a chubby, 39-year-old child who lives with her father Kunizo behind his barber shop in an Iwakuni neighborhood where women in straw hats pull wooden carts along narrow streets. On August 6, 1945, Yoriko was exposed to the atomic bomb *in utero*—as a fetus in her mother's womb—and lived. Her life, unfortunately, has amounted to little more than sitting on a chair all day in the corner of the barber shop, leafing through glossy picture magazines that she cannot read.

Yoriko has the mental and emotional development of a two-year-old infant. She suffers from microencephaly—small brain size—caused by the atomic bomb. Her mother died of A-bomb disease a few years ago and now her unfathomably good-natured father takes care of her, resisting all suggestions that she be institutionalized.

If Hiroshima were bombed with a modern nuclear device today the devastation would not be confined to the city limits, as it was in 1945. Now it might well reach as far as that two-chair barber shop in Iwakuni.

Hiroshima, however, is not a likely target. It lacks major military facilities. If Hiroshima ever re-experiences a nuclear nightmare it will probably be due to the presence of the other symbol of militarism nearby, the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station

# REARMING JAPAN

at Iwakuni. In a nuclear showdown, the Marine base, not Hiroshima, would likely be the target of a Soviet attack. In that event Hiroshima would suffer secondary, but perhaps still lethal, damage.

If Hiroshima is destroyed a second time, it will probably again be at the hands of the U.S. Enemy or ally, the result would at the least be the same, but most likely much worse.

Yet, as was true in 1945, the Japanese government would bear a major share of the blame itself. This is the dangerous bind, replete with tragic irony, that the citizens of Hiroshima and Iwakuni find themselves in today.

Nothing to hide?

Rumor has it that nuclear weapons are stockpiled at the Iwakuni base, in violation of the Japanese government's hallowed "Three Non-Nuclear Principles." From his home nearby, an elderly Iwakuni peace activist, Isao Kohno, scrupulously monitors

planes that arrive and take off from the base, searching for evidence of a nuclear delivery. Demonstrators 5,000 strong have attempted to form human chains around the base, protesting the alleged presence—or expected arrival—of U.S. Tomahawk cruise missiles tipped with nuclear warheads.

The Marine base lies between the Monzen River and the exquisite Inland Sea, surrounded by mist-shrouded hills. It may be one of the loveliest settings for a military encampment anywhere. Residents of the city of Iwakuni have been denied this prime real estate for some time, for it has had a military tenant for almost 50 years. It was a Japanese naval air station during World War II and a leading U.S. Air Force outpost during the Korean War. (It is only 320 miles from Seoul, South Korea.)

The Marines landed at Iwakuni in 1962. It's now the only Marine base on mainland Japan. More than 11,000 servicemen and civilians maintain and supply the ships that

call and the tactical aircraft based there, including F-4 Phantoms, A-4 Skyhawks and A-6 Intruders, capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Japan's Self-Defense Forces are represented by anti-submarine and rescue aircraft.

Americans who assert that Japan is not spending enough money on its own defense generally ignore the fact that this country has ceded to the U.S. huge chunks of its most precious resource—land. More than 100 American military facilities are crammed into a country slightly smaller than the state of California (with a population of 130 million). In Japan most homeowners have front-door and back-door, as well as next-door neighbors.

"We have no trouble with you taking pictures," says Capt. Roger "Skip" Samad, public affairs officer, as he conducts a tour. Then he adds with alacrity: "We have nothing to hide here." Indeed, the Marine base at Iwakuni seems like a college campus. There's a softball field, a golf course and



*People looking down at a scale model of Hiroshima at the Peace Memorial Museum there (left) and Yoriko Hatanaka, a 39-year-old child who lives with her father. She was in utero when exposed to the atomic bomb blast.*

Do nuclear weapons exist on the base? McComb smiles. "I respond like everyone else in the military," he answers. "I can neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons here."

Asked to comment on this vague answer as the briefing breaks up, Samad explains, "The policy of neither confirming nor denying is decided at the upper levels. But, you know, the Japanese people have accepted it and they understand it and if we said anything else now they'd think something was happening." He starts to explain the Three Non-Nuclear Principles but can't remember past number one and ingenuously calls them the "Three Nuclear Principles."

"I'm sorry to have to take the company line, but some things we can't talk about," Samad says. "Yet again, we've got nothing to hide here. You've got to remember, we're just here for the defense of Japan. Now the Japanese are taking more interest in defense, and I think that will be a big issue here in the next few years."

Outside the White House at Iwakuni, a Phantom jet circles overhead, a speck in the blue sky high above the American and Japanese flags fluttering side by side in the brisk summer breeze.

#### A forward base.

The U.S. occupied Japan at the end of World War II and has never really left. It has maintained 50,000 troops in Japan, more than 200 aircraft and major military facilities—naval ports, air bases and communication, command and control and intelligence (C3I) stations to improve its nuclear war-fighting capabilities.

The U.S. has been spending about \$2 billion a year on these operations, the Japanese half that amount. Many Americans, who believe that the U.S. is in Japan to defend the Japanese, resent this imbalance. Actually, we are in Japan primarily to protect our own interests. Since World War II, it should be remembered, the only wars the U.S. has fought were set in the Far East.

Japan has been invaluable as a forward base for the American military. It is the principal jumping-off point for a rapid deployment force in the Pacific. U.S. Marines based in Japan regularly conduct amphibious assault exercises in South Korea. Blackbird spy planes soar out of Kadena Air Force base, the largest operational air base in the world. The aircraft carrier *Midway* makes its home at Yokosuka and other aircraft carriers and battleships regularly call at Japan's ports. From Japan the U.S. can patrol the entire Pacific, ring the Soviets' Eastern ports and protect what has become the world's most important economic triad—South Korea, China and Japan.

"To understand the future," Secretary of State George Shultz said recently, "you must understand the Pacific." And President Ronald Reagan declared last August that "the great Pacific Basin, with all its nations and all its potential for growth and development, is the future."

That the U.S. considers the far Pacific a strategic powderkeg was underscored recently by the Reagan administration's harsh response to New Zealand's refusal to allow a port call by a U.S. ship that may have carried nuclear weapons. What the administration fears is not a nuclear-free New Zealand but an antinuclear domino effect that would eventually be felt in Japan, where the fractured peace movement is once again on the rise. The Reagan threats against New Zealand are actually warnings to the Japanese.

#### The pressure's on.

American pressure on Japan to remilitarize is nothing new. What is new, and surprising, is the degree to which Japan is aiding and abetting—even encouraging—joint military projects, which soon may include the introduction of nuclear weapons to Japan.



Dennis Wheeler

The significance of what is happening in Japan today cannot be compared to changes in any other country. Japan is unique in many ways: as the only country to have already experienced the direct effects of the bomb, as the most pacifist-minded major nation, as the economic success story of the postwar period (at least partly a result of its pacifism).

Japan is the only major country whose very constitution, drafted after WWII, forever renounces the right to wage war. It is the only major country whose government, since 1968, has explicitly vowed never to produce, possess or store nuclear weapons. It is the only major country that maintains what it claims is a strictly defensive military force. It is the only major country that has kept military spending at about only 1 percent of its gross national product (GNP). (The U.S. spends about 7 percent of its GNP on defense.)

With its national pride, capital and brainpower focused on the design and manufacture of consumer products, Japan—in amassing 10 percent of world trade—has been a shining example of the advantages of steering a non-military path. Japan has given peace a chance, and it has worked.

But pacifism eroded over the years, as the U.S. urged the Japanese to provide a larger share of its own defense, and as

memories of Hiroshima and World War II faded. Yet this process accelerated in 1982, when Yasuhiro Nakasone rose to power as prime minister.

Japan has been governed by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) since 1955. The LDP, despite its name, is quite conservative. In Japan, however, conservatism has never been equated—as it often is in the West—with "hawkishness." Until Nakasone arrived, LDP leaders, at least in public, appeared to be nearly as pacifist as the majority of its citizens.

But Nakasone was known as a hawk before he assumed power, and he has maintained that profile since taking office. In his most controversial statement, which was later recanted, he vowed to make Japan an "unsinkable aircraft carrier." He has asked the Japanese to "challenge taboos."

Perhaps even more significantly, he has not been afraid, unlike so many previous prime ministers, to promote Japanese nationalism—to the point of jingoism—and to speak of Japan as an "international power." He went so far as to set a goal of making Japan so powerful it would no longer need to be defended by the U.S. at all.

While Americans in the Reagan era may consider increases in the Japanese defense budget modest—they've been averaging about 7 percent a year since Nakasone took office—many Japanese consider them monumental in a period when Japan has been in and out of recession, spending on education has been cut and social expenditures in general have been held to only about 1 percent of annual growth. With artful juggling of the books, Nakasone managed to keep military spending (at \$13 billion) under the sacrosanct 1-percent-of-GNP ceiling again for 1985. But in a startling move, Nakasone recently suggested that this decades-old standard would have to be shattered next year. When that happens there will no longer be even a symbolic cap on the Japanese military.

But what has made Nakasone the most influential Japanese prime minister in years is his ability to tap a nationalistic streak in the Japanese people that many observers were starting to doubt even existed anymore. Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of how the Nakasone government is attempting to rekindle nationalism is its campaign to sanitize school textbooks, reducing or even deleting descriptions of the excesses of Japan's imperial past.

Right-wing groups are flourishing. There are an estimated 1,000 ultra-conservative organizations in the country. Also, pacifism is peeling away. Many Japanese are beginning to call for their country to resume its rightful place as a power broker, not just an economic power. And 40 years after Hiroshima, Japan's famous "nuclear allergy" is turning into nuclear amnesia.

Many American reporters, in contending

*Continued on page 22*



Robert Del Tredici

a lot of young men in shorts bicycling or jogging on the seawall.

Many of the concrete buildings with steeply-slanted, Japanese-style tile roofs were built by the Japanese government only recently. U.S. fighter jets in training take off and land every few minutes. On one runway sits a cluster of sea planes with the once-feared bright red balls painted on their sides; a hangar that once housed Japan's Zero fighters is still in use.

The flags of the U.S. and Japan fly side by side in front of the headquarters building, a two-story concrete edifice known as "The White House."

Inside the building, Samad runs through a press briefing. "Our new facilities program is moving forward quickly," he explains. And an 8,000-foot lighted carrier deck runway will be installed next year. There's tremendous building going on now. If you were here five years ago and came back now you wouldn't recognize it. A lot of facilities are built by the Japanese. If we ever leave they will take over, so they subsidize the construction." Samad says he doesn't know if it was the rapid Reagan increases in the U.S. defense budget, or the steady rise in the Japanese budget, or both, which inspired the local building boom.

In granting the request for a tour of the base, Samad had explained that Lt. Col. Stephen McComb, executive officer at the base, would not answer any questions, since the visit had been arranged on short notice. But as soon as the briefing ends, McComb is asked whether Japan's Three Non-Nuclear Principles—a governmental pledge never to produce or possess nuclear weapons, nor to allow them on its territory—were being eroded at Iwakuni.

"I have no information on that one way or another," he replies, frowning uneasily.



# LETTERS

## Divestment fixation

I WAS INTERESTED TO READ IN JOAN Walsh's article (*ITT*, July 10) on the anti-apartheid struggle at Berkeley that the movement there is considering boycotts as a strategy now that the Regents have rejected divestment. I've wondered for years why the movement has fixed on divestment. UC President David Gardner may be "cynical," but in saying that divestment would not "accomplish more than a change in ownership," he is almost right. The other thing it would accomplish, of course, is a symbolic repudiation of participation in the apartheid economy by U.S. corporations. I don't knock symbolism, but why not get the symbolic value and also put some real pressure on the corporations?

For instance, every college or university buys motor vehicles, building materials, appliances, and so on. If colleges (and unions, churches, state governments, etc.) decided to make these major purchases only from companies not doing business in South Africa, that would cost the other companies hundreds of millions of dollars, and might give them the only kind of reason they can really understand for pulling out of South Africa.

Richard Ohmann  
Middletown, Conn.

## Redefining art

AS ANITA ALVERIO SAYS (*ITT*, LETTERS, June 26), "The Birth Project" and Judy Chicago's documentation of it raise questions and challenges for all women, particularly for feminist artists

**In These Times** is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

who are working to break down the historical barriers to the recognition of women's creative work. It seems premature to suggest on the basis of this one work that the feminist enterprise of redefining art and reclaiming women's traditional modes of creative expression is inevitably doomed.

In developing feminist criticism, it is essential for women to remember that the categories of "success" and "failure," what is and is not "art" and even what are and are not "acceptable standards" have all been used to exclude women from the arts or devalue and deny the creative work we do. More to the point, they accept implicitly the man-made myth of women's powerlessness to evolve new modes of expression and new ways of working together.

Of course, women are not powerless. Both "The Birth Project" and Chicago's "Dinner Party" show women in the process of forging new definitions of what art can and should be. This process did not begin and will not end with these works; nor should it be judged solely on their relative success or failure. Surely one of the reasons Chicago does document her art is so other women can learn from it, build on it and continue this difficult, necessary work.

K. Kaufman  
San Francisco

## If socialism comes . . .

ROBERT HURWITT, IN HIS ARTICLE "THE Movement Media" (*ITT*, July 10), states: "...the Movement's overriding focus on the war for so long left a whole agenda of other issues too long unaddressed and so...many...became disillusioned enough to turn their backs on politics altogether and to turn to conservatism as their true new faith." This view fails to come to grips with the fact that Movement demonstrations increased and decreased in size with corresponding increases and decreases in the size of the draft.

Another era of social reform occurred in the '30 when most Americans supported the New Deal because most Americans were themselves poor. Such eras were consistent with America's focus on self-interested individualism and not a break with that tradition.

If socialism comes to the U.S. it will be in response to protracted wide-scale adversity, rather than from education and advocacy alone. In such a situation, socialists would be able to galvanize existing frustrations toward a more equitable social order.

Robert Takaroff  
Jackson Heights, N.Y.

## Intelligent journalism

I HAVE BEEN HESITANT TO MAKE THIS contribution of \$100 for a very long time. I am not a socialist and I disagree with many of the editorial positions taken by your journal. However, one need not stand by ideological purity to understand that this country urgently needs intelligent journalism from a democratic left perspective.

At a time when journals such as *Working Papers* have folded and others, such as *Mother Jones*, have been reduced to left-wing versions of *People* magazine, I applaud your efforts. Your journal is a quality journal and I wish you well.

Clifford T. Lee

## Liberating wheelchairs

DAVID CORN'S "MEDIA COOL AID" JULY (*ITT*, 24) contains the trite, hackneyed and prejudicial term "confined to a wheelchair" in describing Teddy Pendergrass.

Please don't use "confined to a wheelchair." I suspect Pendergrass is a lot more mobile with that chair than if he didn't have one. Disabled people think of wheelchairs as ways to get around, not jails.

Mary Johnson, Editor  
The Disability Rag  
Louisville, Ky.

## Revive us again

AS A SELF-RESPECTING, CARD-CARRYING member of the so-called "folk revival," I've got to respond to John Storm Roberts' indictment of the revival (*ITT*, May 8) and its most visible (or should I say audible) component, "Prairie Home Companion" (PHC). Roberts unfairly lumps the whole revival together with the radio show (which, I agree, can be much too bland). Although sometimes it's hard to find, there's plenty of good music out there played by people with, yes, all sorts of convoluted relationships to the traditions from whence the music springs.

And plenty of these groups can play. I'm thinking of just some of the groups I've heard over the years: Michael Doucet and Besausoleil (which, I suspect, may be the Cajun group whose name Roberts couldn't remember); numerous performers of Irish music, including Liz Carroll, Mick Moloney, Kevin Burke, the late Joe Heany, De Danaan; klezmer clarinetist Andy Statman and Kapelye, a New York-based klezmer group that perhaps Roberts hasn't had the pleasure of hearing; a quintet called Fiddle Fever that uses traditional American music as a jumping off point for all kinds of inspired playing; songwriters Hazel Dickens, Si Kahn and the late Stan Rogers; I Guillari di Piazza, another NYC group that plays the dazzlingly rhythmic music of southern Italy; I could go on and on.

Roberts is unfair when he faults PHC and the revival for not presenting rap and other current folk forms (he's absolutely right, that is what they are). I've got rap blasting at me from the major media; I turn to the revival when I want something else.

Don't be so hard on the revival. If it weren't for us, a lot of this music wouldn't survive except on vinyl.

Mimi Bluestone  
New York

## The truly evil

MANY DECADES HAVE PASSED SINCE IT was proven by von Mises, *et. al.*, that interventionism and socialism lead inexorably to slavery and chaos. Being a sane and thoughtful man, I utterly reject the philosophies of the left and the right, which both espouse interventionism.

You of the "New Left" are truly evil, mendacious human beings for promulgating such discredited and dangerous systems as socialism. Your only virtue is a slightly greater honesty: those on the right claim to be exponents of freedom and laissez-faire, but are in fact interventionist (hence socialist) wolves in sheep's clothing.

I leave it to you and your intellectually bankrupt colleagues to discover for yourselves the only workable system for human life on this planet: laissez-faire capitalism. I suggest you begin your journey of re-awakening with reading and reflection. You might start with Ayn Rand, von Mises, Szasz, Hayek, Bastiat, Sowell and their ilk: a vast panoply of freedom.

I naturally also reject your offer of a subscription to *In These Times*. From its apparent philosophy, this magazine is a virulent poison, more lethal than all those handguns you would like to ban.

I welcome the chance to debate any of the "New Left" on any topic they might choose. Freedom, the only condition under which a man might live, is in my corner for this debate I will win.

Michael C. Hovey  
Wilmington, Del.

## I miss ITT

WITH ME ENTERING COLLEGE AND ALL, I thought that I couldn't afford to keep my subscription to *In These Times*. However, when a friend of mine brought a copy of the *Los Angeles Times* (June 11) to my attention, I knew I had had quite enough.

There it was, a full-page ad with the heading "Central America Burns...Congress Fiddles." Below, a picture of a three or four-year-old girl with the caption, "These are the victims... They are *contras*." I didn't know that the *contras* dragged their families along with them on their attacks.

I thought even the *L.A. Times* would have more sense than that. Apparently, I was wrong. Please renew my *ITT* subscription as soon as possible. I miss it.

J. Chin  
Los Angeles

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## IN MEMORIAM

By Sean Wilentz

**H**ERBERT GUTMAN, A world-class scholar and one of the finest and most imaginative historians writing today, died on July 21 at the age of 57. Best known for his books on American workers and the black family, he was also a source of immense inspiration and affection for the generation of radical historians just now beginning to make its mark. Almost singlehanded, Gutman shook up the drowsy field of American labor history and thereby changed the way we think about American history. With an abiding love for archival research and for the ordinary men and women behind the sources, he dug deep, proving that this country had a working-class presence and consciousness worth talking about.

It was Gutman's intense distrust of orthodoxy that gave life to his history. Most of all, he hated the way elitists of every political persuasion condescended to working people and disparaged them for not living up to some preconceived moral or political standard. To those liberals and conservatives who called "the poor" culturally deprived or pathological, to those radicals who demeaned American workers as the prisoners of false consciousness, Gutman replied with reams of evidence, exposing the orthodoxies as shams. The essays in *Work, Culture and Society in Industrialized America* exemplify this.

His devastating assault on the social biases and pseudo-history of the "Moynihan Report," in *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, was typical—a sustained demonstration that the presumed collapse of black culture and kinship under slavery had been at the least greatly exaggerated. By looking at the kinds of hard evidence the policy experts disdained—plantation records, census figures, ex-slaves' letters—Gutman found that the slaves and their children fought heroically and with success to build their own cultural passageways and preserve their dignity against seemingly impossible odds. He found the same kinds of struggles in the history of Irish railway men, black miners and Jewish market women, exploding the common notion that 19th-

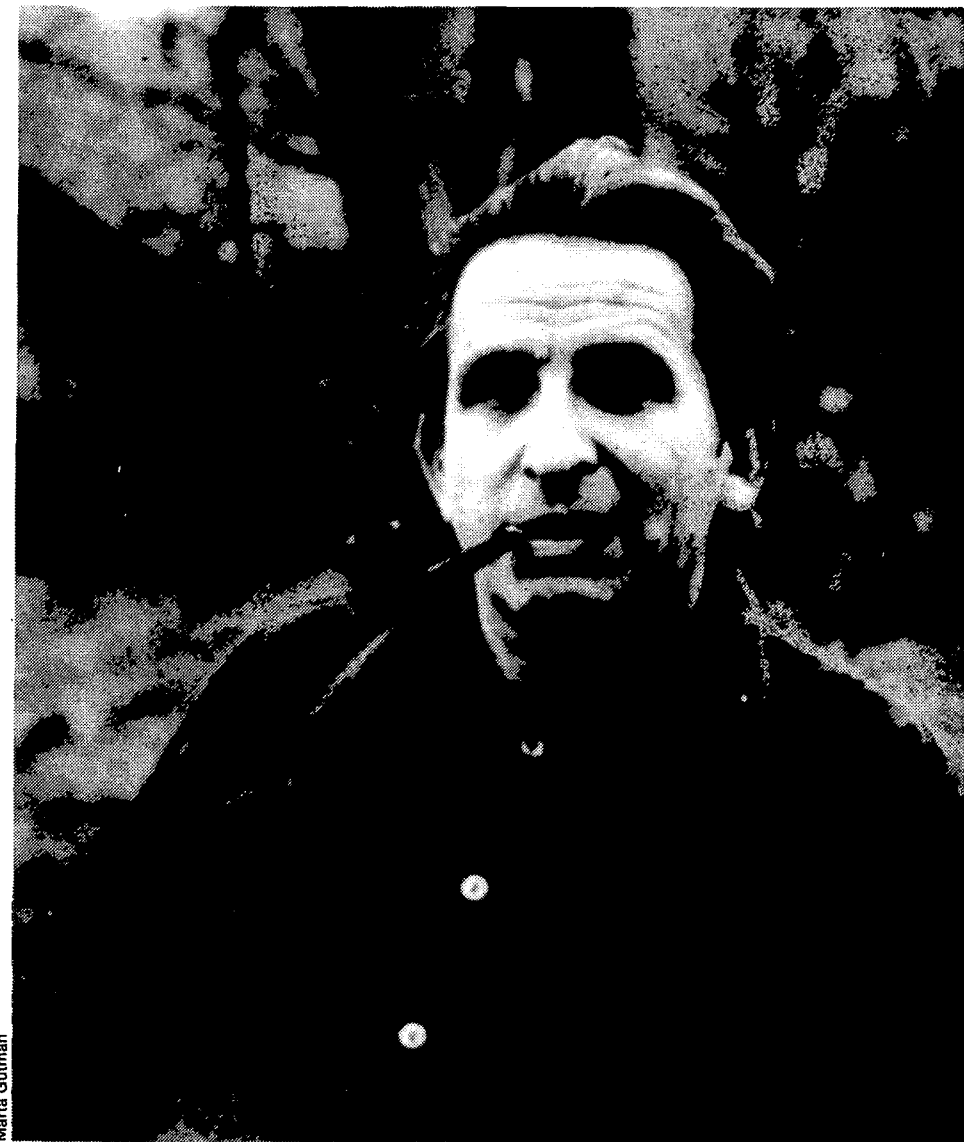
*Herbert Gutman won praise for making ordinary men and women, as well as presidents, fit subjects for historians.*

century capitalists turned their power to authority without a fight.

#### From top to bottom.

Gutman often won praise for having made plebeians as well as presidents fit subjects for historians. But his achievement was far greater. In the spirit of W.E.B. Du Bois, a historian he revered, Gutman repeatedly pointed out that much of what passed for historical explanation in this country amounted to little more than recycled middle-class myths. And he challenged himself and his fellow historians to reinterpret American history from top to bottom, always cautioning against substituting new myths for the old ones.

His was a vision that defied the conventions of a smug profession and confused



Marta Gutman

## Gutman: historian of the working class

those academics who clung jealously to their narrow subdisciplines. Why was a labor historian writing about the black family? What did studies of little local strikes have to do with the great political dramas of the Gilded Age? Such questions irritated Gutman, but they also reminded him how historians had lost touch with the great critical tradition in American history, stretching back to Frederick Turner and Charles Beard, a tradition that always insisted on drawing historical connections from every kind in search of the whole of American history.

For Gutman, unlike most of his predecessors, class relations, not just "economics," lay at the center of that history. But like Turner, Beard and the rest—and unlike most of his contemporaries—Gutman aimed to understand the whole picture.

Gutman's democratic scholarly sensibilities were at one with his expansive temperament. It was hard to be neutral about him. Those who preferred their historians out of central casting—mannerly, dispassionate, ever respectful of responsible authority—usually didn't take to him, and the feeling was mutual. The rest of us, from here to Shanghai and back, loved him because he showed us that you didn't have to obey "their" rules to partake of the life of the mind.

#### Accessible scholars.

Gutman believed firmly that scholarship meant nothing if left only to scholars. A superb critic of other people's manuscripts, he always pushed us—especially younger historians—to keep our writing accessible to the widest possible audience. He also spent a large portion of the last decade working out programs to bring the new labor history he'd pioneered to trade unionists, labor educators and community college teachers.

This work culminated in the American Working Class History Project, based at the CUNY Graduate Center, where he was

a distinguished professor. Along with his talented young co-workers—in staffing, as in other things, he respected brains, not seniority—he was well along in devising a multimedia curriculum on American social history, aimed at workers and working-class students.

A great deal about this country broke Herb Gutman's heart. He despised the way the nation's highest egalitarian ideas have been turned into capitalist apologetics. He resented the wasted opportunity and physical ugliness of so much of our new late-model cities and suburbs, and his scholarly writing registered his sadness.

Yet he never retreated into bitterness or cynicism. There was, beneath his formidable exterior, and beneath his breathtaking erudition and intellect, an innocence of spirit, a deep curiosity about other people and how they lived. He enjoyed spritzing and gossip, but tried to

look for something extraordinary—something "smart," he'd say, something "out-tasight"—in almost everyone he met and every place he visited. Often he found it where others hadn't. And when he did, he would smile a smile of boundless joy.

Nor did he ever relinquish his stubborn optimism about the world. If his history taught any general lessons, they were that the dispossessed could accomplish the extraordinary even under the harshest adversity, and that the future remained open for even greater achievements. This last point was particularly important. It distinguished Gutman from other would-be radical scholars and pundits who fall into reading history as a jeremiad, a chronicle that leads inexorably to one form or another of cultural torpor and elite control. It was Gutman who reminded us of the other side of American history, the side that had resisted, sporadically but at times effectively, the ascension of Acquisitive Man and the debasement of democracy. That struggle had seemed doomed before in American history, only to re-emerge later, shocking those who ran the country, wresting at least a measure of power from them, and redefining democratic institutions. There was every reason, Gutman implied, to expect that even now, despite everything, more shocks were in the making.

Gutman's writings will continue to inspire and guide historical scholarship. As he used to say all the time, "Historians still must learn much" about every aspect of American history. His books and essays will also remind us of a turn of mind that Herb Gutman shared with a kindred spirit, the 19th-century English socialist William Morris. He had a lot in common with Morris—acuity and inventiveness, a love of human handiwork, a cosmopolitan, international outlook linked with a special understanding of his native land. Both men were gifted with an abiding decency, which they sought out and respected in others. Both of them managed to cultivate their brilliance without crimping their humanity.

Above all, perhaps, Morris' intellectual burden was Gutman's as well. A century ago, Morris reflected on the ironies of history: "I pondered all these things...how men fight and lose the battle, and the thing they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name."

Like Morris, Gutman pondered all these things, and he made us ponder them, too.

Sean Wilentz is the author of *Chants Democratic*, *New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850*.

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# PERSPECTIVES

By Steve Brouwer

**T**HE DEMOCRATIC PARTY has for years portrayed itself as the party of the average American. When Franklin Roosevelt offered Americans a New Deal, the party appealed to the "common man." For the most part, however, it has been unable to articulate clear reasons about how and why it would serve the needs of average citizens. Walter Mondale's overwhelming defeat in November increased the incoherence and the lack of focus in the party and moved many American leaders rightward. They have nestled up to the Republicans, hoping that the recent success and optimism of the right might rub off on them.

The Republicans have managed the seemingly impossible: in the past 20 years they have captured the presidency and the Senate while continuously sharpening a conservative ideology that serves the interests of a very small sector of our society. The ideas and programs they espouse are 100 percent favorable to the wealthiest .5 to 5 percent of our population. Their policies are designed to protect the extreme disparities of wealth in the U.S.:

- between 1 and 2 percent of all American families own 57 percent of all privately held stock and over 70 percent of municipal bonds.

- the same 1 to 2 percent own 33 percent of all the private wealth in this country—that is stocks, bonds, money, cars, homes, real estate, stereos—anything that can be owned. They own more than four times as much as the bottom 60 percent of the people, who own only about 8 percent of America. Five percent of the population owns more than half of the United States, or 53 percent.

Through tax policies and foreign policy, through fiscal programs and social programs, the Republican Party (with the help of some conservative Democratic allies) tries to meet the needs of the upper classes first. It protects their financial assets and guarantees them a healthy return on their investments. In return, very wealthy Americans pay handsomely to the Republican Party for services rendered.

In recent decades, the Republican ascendancy has been accompanied by the ever increasing control of economic life by giant corporations, banks and insurance companies. In 20 years, 1955 to

## The Democrats must seize the 'work ethic'

1975, the concentration of corporate ownership grew at such a rate that the top 200 manufacturing corporations were able to control as much of the economy as the top 500 had previously controlled. By 1981 the 50 largest manufacturing corporations owned 42 percent of all manufacturing assets.

By the time Reagan took office in 1981 the power of big business and the philosophy of the right was so well established that rich individuals and businesses could expect great gains at the expense of the rest of American taxpayers. Today the corporations and the richest 1 percent of Americans pay 17 percent of all federal taxes; 25 years ago they paid 43 percent.

The Republican willingness to mold an ideology to the needs of a very small minority should have made the Democrats' job very easy. But because average Americans are given very little information and analysis of their economic situation by the corporate controlled media, the Democratic Party would have to develop and disseminate its own analysis. By failing to do so, it has habitually avoided the two most obvious economic issues of our times:

- the extraordinary inequality of wealth among our citizens; and
- the ever-growing power of huge corporations and financial institutions over all aspects of American life.

If Democrats wanted to, they could easily reinforce the power of these two issues by demonstrating the failure of "trickle down" economics. The prosperity of the few has been accompanied by harder times for everybody else:

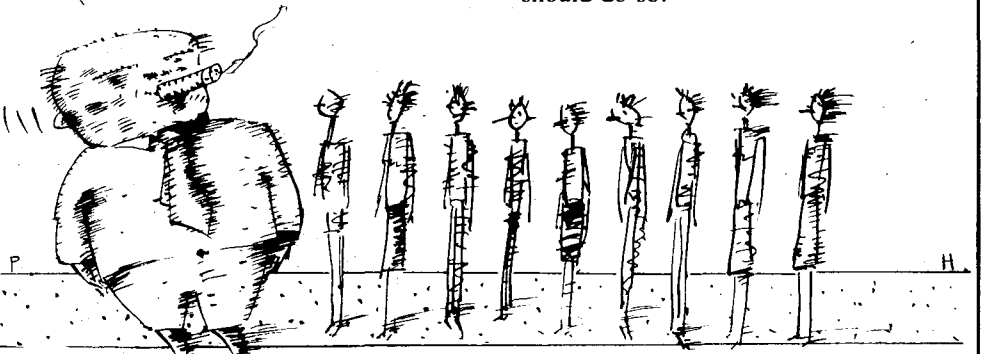
- The percentage of middle-income households declined from 53 percent to 42 percent from 1978 to 1983; at the same time, poor and limited income families increased from 32 percent to 40 percent of the population.

- Average weekly wages, when corrected for inflation, are lower now, \$174.92, than they were in 1967, \$184.83.

- Between 1969 and 1982, income was redistributed upward; the share of income going to the bottom 70 percent of families dropped from 43 percent to 38 percent; almost all of this was gained by the top 10 percent, who saw their income climb from 29 percent to 33 percent of the total.

### The constituency: working people.

And to whom are the Democrats supposed to speak? To a natural constituency of 90 percent to 95 percent of the American people, the people who have to work for a living just to get by. Recently the particular interests of women, minorities, organized workers and the poor have been distorted so that they appear to be special interests. But they are not special interests in the sense of all the small constituencies



of wealthy or affluent Americans—the American Medical Association, the Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Board of Realtors, etc.—who pay the Republicans to keep them in a privileged position. The Democratic groups are merely various Americans who want to share in the universal American dream: a job with decent pay where one can work with dignity and feel free to speak one's mind.

"Working people?"—sounds like an attempt to build class consciousness in the United States. But political pundits have warned us that Americans are notably indifferent to class conflict. In part this is true. Leftists have presented a picture of the "working class" that is unconvincing and limited. Dubious distinctions have been drawn between manual and intellectual workers, blue collar and white collar, manufacturing and service, employees and professionals, poverty-stricken people who are out of work and those who work hard to put bread on the table. These distinctions are seldom helpful. Almost all of the above can be included under the banner of "working people," the 90 percent of the population who must live by their labor alone. They can effectively be contrasted with the "affluent" and "wealthy" Americans who make up the remaining 10 percent.

### Households in 1980

	Working	Affluent	Wealthy
Percentage of households	90	9.5	0.5
Income range	\$0-36,000	\$36,000-125,000	more than \$125,000
Average earned income	\$14,200	\$48,700	\$127,000
Average unearned income	\$888	\$8,900	\$97,000

Having identified a constituency, how do we get their attention? The fundamental needs of all Americans can be summed up in these three elementary demands:

- (1) a job for everyone who is willing to work
- (2) a decent education for all children
- (3) adequate support for elderly and disabled citizens.

And how do we keep the attention of

working Americans? By taking the "work ethic," that favorite theme of the conservatives, away from the Republicans and contrasting it with the "money ethic." The myth of the money ethic has held sway over the last several years—"supply side" economics falsely suggested that the money ethic and the work ethic are synonymous. The true work ethic—that society requires everyone to work in order to produce the necessities of life, that their work entitles them to share in the fruits of the social labor—is egalitarian. When the work ethic is contrasted with the money ethic, the pursuit of great wealth, then the machinations of a very few people—that 0.5 percent to 5 percent of the population—became very clear: they use the government and their business lobbying organizations to ensure their privileged position and their investments.

If the Democratic Party is to make sense to working Americans, it must seize the work ethic for itself and stress two universal economic themes:

- everyone who wants a job should have one
- everyone who can work for a living should do so.

This will require dealing with the favorite and most useful whipping boy of conservatives—welfare.

Our welfare system is a gift to the right. It allows them to manipulate the egalitarian feelings of many average Americans. The main reason that the Republicans get so much mileage out of "welfarism" is not the innate mean-spiritedness of the public, but the perception that the work ethic is being abused. One way to get the public to understand how they are manipulated by the rich, to direct their attention to the true economic inequities, is to remove the irritation and distraction caused by a goofy welfare system.

Welfare and work—concrete proposals for developing a work ethic that appeals to working Americans:

- (1) Eliminate welfare and Aid to Families with Dependent Children for all able-bodied adults.
- (2) Provide each of these people with a guaranteed job.
- (3) Guarantee free day care and health service for all these people, as well as for anyone else with a low income.
- (4) Augment wages for low income people generally with a partial continuation of food stamps and housing allowances.
- (5) Provide new jobs either through public agencies that act for public purposes or by incentives provided to private employers.
- (6) For full employment to be a possibility, especially in a time when automation is replacing humans in the factory and the office, it is likely that the work week will have to be shortened. Two of the possibilities are to require a 36- or 37-hour work week or to encourage special areas of the economy to adopt a 30-hour work week.

Can an American political party capture the imagination and support of the "working" electorate? Of course, if it will articulate its ideas as clearly as the Republicans do on behalf of the wealthy. Will the Democrats be that "new" party? Not if many of their leaders continue to court corporate America.

Steve Brouwer is just finishing a book on *The Socialist Faith*.

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By Marcia Pally

THE OLDEST PROFESSION has been called a great many things but rarely a job. The church considers it a sin; the state, a crime; shrinks, individual pathology or social malaise. Communities see it as everything from an eyesore to a ruinous influence on their children.

But if nascent prostitutes' rights organizations have their way, all this will change. Prostitution will be an occupation like any other, with no stigma assigned to the workers, no sleazy lure to places of assignation and neither shame nor bravado associated with patrons. There will be "places of employment," unions, advertising campaigns and computerized billing. And there will be professional associations with regular conventions, like the one sponsored by COYOTE (Cast Off Your Old Tired Ethics) in San Francisco last month.

The COYOTE conference was held specifically to discuss the effects of the anti-porn laws and AIDS on women in the life; last February a broader program was presented at the First World Congress of Whores in Amsterdam, Holland. Hookers, ex-hookers and hooker advocates from Europe, Asia and the U.S. compared work conditions, drafted a World Charter of Prostitutes' Rights and established an International Committee for Prostitutes' Rights.

Like the very concept of unions in the 19th century, the idea of prostitutes organizing as a workforce is almost beyond imagination—we are so used to thinking of them as sluts, lost women or victims of class and capitalism. And the idea of selling sex grates against our feeling that sex is intimate, private and potent. We all sell our time, energy and even our bodies in one way or another, but most of us hold that particular adventure of the flesh as our "own." It is an expression of the self, we imagine, and the person who can command it for a buck invades the soul.

But while prostitutes have complaints, waywardness or moral decline are not among them. Female teenage hookers are raped on the average of once a month; one Seattle study showed 70 percent of black streetwalkers had been abused, 60 percent of the time by customers, 20 percent by pimps

*In the hookers' utopia, a 'john' would have to buy a license that he would present to the lady of his choice for her services.*

and 20 percent by the police. And cops have the longest arm; not only is soliciting illegal in this country, hookers who meet and talk about health or self-defense, for instance, can be picked up for conspiring to prostitute. If you turn tricks in your apartment you can be charged with running a brothel and your roommate can be convicted of pimping. Last year

in New York, 50 "madames" were arrested under the pimping laws; only five male pimps were picked up.

In many countries where prostitution is not criminal, conditions are far from ideal. It's legal to sell sex in Canada, Sweden, England and France, for example, but illegal to place an ad or rent a room—imagine trying to run a business that way. Anyone living with a prostitute, lover or friend, can be charged with pimping which, as in the U.S., makes a shambles of women's private lives. Adding insult to injury, Sweden and Strasbourg levy prostitutes so severely that women end up in jail not on vice charges but for tax default.

(Though information on prostitution in Third World countries is harder to come by, women from Zimbabwe, Thailand and Vietnam spoke at the Amsterdam conference about antisolicitation or anti-prostitution laws, the thriving black markets regularly harassed by the police and the practice by the governments of Zimbabwe and Vietnam of sending women off for rehabilitation—"sewing, typing and regaining your dignity," as one woman put it.)

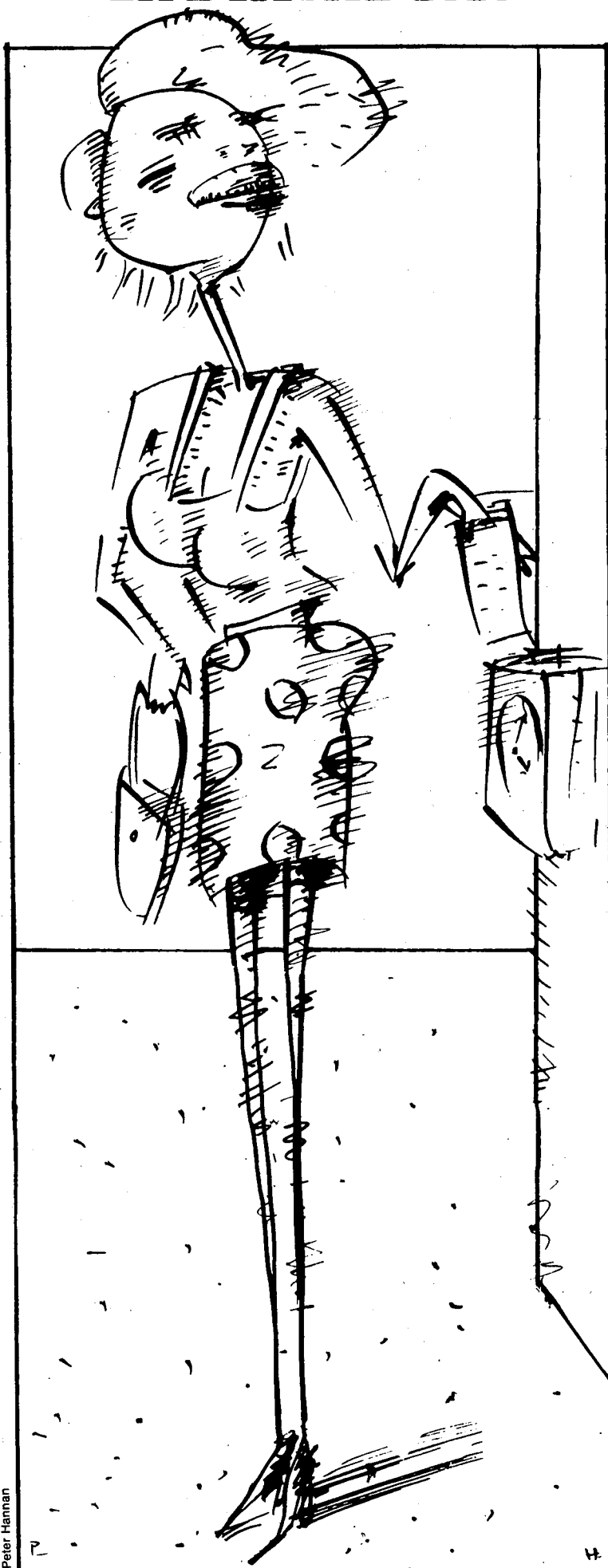
The way prostitutes' rights advocates see it, laws that aim to keep tricking illegal or invisible shield neither hookers nor communities from their problems. Margo St. James, founder of COYOTE, told *In These Times*, "Streetwalkers don't get pushed into residential neighborhoods until the cops sweep the streets around hotels and bars, where the customers are. When cops don't bust gay bars, gays don't have to find each other on the street—why not have hooker bars or hot-sheet hotels?"

Such a set-up might address a community's concern about visibility and children and prostitutes' worry about imprisonment, fines and a record. "The point is," says Gail Pheterson, an associate professor of sociology working with prostitutes' rights in Holland, "prostitution should be zoned like other businesses, like restaurants. You don't locate a business with 20 employees in an inappropriate area. Put prostitution where it belongs: under work codes." But this requires that solicitation and places of assignation be legal. Understandably, decriminalization is at the top of prostitutes' priorities. "Isn't it crazy," said St. James. "You can talk about murder on the street, but you can't offer sex for money."

According to organizers, legalizing prostitution might diminish *ex officio* violence, as well. With solicitation illegal, johns and pimps are hardly discouraged from theft, battery or rape—what's a woman going to do, report a guy to the cops? And decriminalizing prostitution may also affect drug use. It's a delicate issue among prostitute rights groups: some women want to discuss drug use while others fear that the association between addiction and hooking will hamper their fledgling movement. But with less violence and where jail terms and a record were no longer threats, drugs might seem less attractive to women, less necessary.

There are places, like Germany and the Netherlands, where the act of prostitution, soliciting, advertising and renting rooms are all legal. But there, women are supervised closely by the state. The regulation often involves restriction on travel and location of workplace, special registrations and

## LIFE IN THE U.S.



### PROSTITUTION

## Hookers call for workers' rights

fines, and compulsory medical exams at the women's expense.

"The restrictions and registrations," says St. James, "are just ways for the government to collect extra taxes. Why should we pay fees over and above the income tax?" She believes that mandatory medical checks, even on a weekly basis, are ineffective curbs of disease, considering how many clients a woman sees between exams. Better for the health of johns and hookers if customers wear condoms; even better if hookers—who, St. James insists, often know more about health care than other sexually active people

—were able to insist on it. To carry that off, however, women, and not the state, would need control of both work conditions and payment—which is just what radical prostitutes want.

In the hookers' utopia, it's not the women who would be registered and taxed but the clients. A guy would have to buy a john license, like a hunting or fishing permit, which he would present to his lady of choice each time he wanted to use her services. The lady would then call an 800 number, the way retailers do to see if customers pay their bills, or plug into her computer and find

IN THESE TIMES AUG. 7-20, 1985 17 out if the guy is clean, solvent and has no history of violence. Medical and financial data on clients would be kept not in police files but with a prostitutes' organization, which might also run clinics and classes in self-defense or other techniques of the trade.

In this idyll, the prostitutes' union might be open not only to women who turn tricks but to porn models and actresses as well. Following the recommendations of Richard Nixon's 1970 porn commission, dirty pics were decriminalized while prostitution was kept illegal. Since then, massage parlors, escort services and other euphemisms—where the (usually male) owners, rather than the women, control the business—have been operating legally. As far as St. James is concerned, this has meant that "pimping was decriminalized for white men, the pornographers. The work wasn't legitimized but the profit off the work was. A peep show dancer makes about \$75 a day—which is a lot of money for a kid. But the owner makes about \$5,000 a week off a few dancers. This is pimping in the worst way: he gets all the control and money and she gets all the blame.... Those men can sell our asses but we can't sell our own. What the hell is that?"

This is a far cry from the approach taken by feminist anti-porn groups. Women Against Pornography, for example, argues that porn should be removed from shelf and screen because it acts as a kind of primer for male viewers who see women trivialized or abused then go out and reproduce what they've observed.

Pheterson feels porn may be a "sharp symptom of what's not right in the world" but finds the solution not in the restriction of porn but in women taking control of the industry. "I'd like to see existing laws against fraud, coercion, rape, battery and child abuse enforced in pornography and prostitution settings. And I'd like to have porn reflect women's sexuality." (Pheterson may soon see her vision realized. Candida Royalle, star of *Hot Rackets*, *Delicious* and *Sizzle*, has left performing and is now producing pornographic videos from the woman's point of view. They contain more cunnilingus and less fellatio than tapes with only the male market in mind, and the build-up of tension actually bears some resemblance to the rhythm and pacing of real-life sex. *Femme* is already in the stores, and *Christine's Secret* and *Urban Heat* will be out in the fall.)

Margo St. James had a few words of her own for the anti-porn movement. "Hugh Hefner has a creepy magazine: he fetishizes virginity and discriminates against prostitutes—he won't let a known prostitute be a bunny or a fold-out. But when the women in the anti-porn movement attack him, they go about it in the wrong way. They won't take his money, for example—Ms. gave back his donation—because it was made from porn. They should take *all* his money. He made it off women; it's *our* money."

"The anti-porn movement isn't supporting prostitutes' rights; it's not organizing porn workers so they can get royalties from their films; it's not trying to change the licensing system that takes control away from the women in the business and gives it to the club owners. It's doing nothing for women's rights and it's jumping in bed with the wrong wing."

*Continued on page 23*





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## FICTION

# Latin America's foremothers

## The House of the Spirits

By Isabel Allende

Translated by Magda Bogin  
Knopf, 368 pp., \$17.95

By Katharine S. Kovacs

IN A RECENT *NEW YORK TIMES* Book Review, Spanish novelist Juan Goytisolo noted that authors from countries with limited economic power and political influence are under special pressures to produce—or reproduce—images that are readily identifiable with their country of origin. When they fulfill these expectations of the “first world” reader, they are commended for creating “perfect exemplars of local values and expressive peculiarities.”

According to Goytisolo, those Latin American authors who have fared well abroad are those who have orchestrated a limited field of recognizable images. With the notable exception of Jorge Luis Borges, they depict “an oppressed continent taking up arms in revolt...and use a sure-fire narrative recipe known as magical realism....” Magical realism is born from the fusion of realistic and fantastic elements through which a startlingly new and presumably more “accurate” picture of life emerges. Developed by Mexico’s Juan Rulfo and Cuba’s Alejo Carpentier, among others, magical realism was brought to its height of expression by the Colombian Gabriel García Márquez.

In *The House of the Spirits*, Isabel Allende faithfully follows this recipe. This might be one reason why her book has been a best-seller in different countries since its publication in Spain in 1982. The fine English translation by Magda Bogin this spring bodes well for a good reception in the U.S. as well. The marketing of the book has been further enhanced by the fact that Isabel Allende is a woman, an exile and the niece of former Chilean President Salvador Allende.

The derivative nature of her book is especially apparent in the

early chapters where one finds numerous references to and even borrowings from García Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Both books chronicle the fortunes of a family in some unnamed South American land. García Márquez follows the Buendías for 100 years. Isabel Allende presents the Valle-Truebas from the turn of the century until 1974.

Several members of Márquez’s Buendía clan seem to resurface in *The House of Spirits*. There is Rosa the Beautiful whose innocence and beauty recall that of Remedios; Uncle Marcos, a magician, aviator and explorer who dies a flamboyant death—twice; Blanca, a direct descendant of Memo Buendía, who falls passionately in love with an inappropriate man. There is also the clairvoyant Clara, who keeps a diary which acts like Melquiádes’ parchment in *Solitude*. In it is recorded the fate of the family. Through it, both Allende and Márquez deal with the ways in which one may preserve the past.

### No more solitude.

After the first 100 pages Allende becomes less interested in “solitude” and more concerned about communion and solidarity and begins to assume her own voice. Allende’s project is not to describe some mythical history of Latin America. She is concerned with the specifically Chilean events that led to the bloody coup that deposed her uncle, Salvador Allende, the first democratically elected Marxist president.

Unlike *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, where events seem to repeat themselves and there is no real change, in *The House of the Spirits* history has a momentum and a force of its own. Allende highlights the dynamic interplay between the family and society by projecting the fictional characters against the backdrop of the flow of history. The ebb and flow in the fortunes of the Truebas parallel the shifts in power in Chilean politics over the past century.

When the book begins, Chile is

still controlled by a small elite of rural landowners. Although the government is civilian and constitutional, the oligarchy assures its hold on power through tactics ranging from coercion and bribing the police to rigging the ballot boxes. In this regard, the machinations of Esteban Trueba are typical of his social class.

In the ’20s, as power begins to shift from the landed and commercial oligarchy to a growing middle class, a program of fundamental social and political reforms is launched. Again we see how Esteban Trueba and the landowners violently resist land reform and other social measures advocated by the center and the left. He is fiercely opposed to such ideas as “Sunday off, a minimum wage, retirement and health plans, maternity leaves for women, elections without coercion, and most serious of all, a peasant organization that would confront the owners.” To keep these notions from contaminating his peasants, he even whips his manager’s son.

This single action is symbolic of many similar actions taken over the years. They establish a pattern of confrontation and repression that worsens with time, pitting large landowners against small businessmen and middle-class entrepreneur against the mostly poorer Communist and socialist supporters. The progressive polarization is manifested within the Trueba family itself. Esteban becomes a Conservative Party senator always railing against the Communist menace; while his wife, his son and other members of the family aid progressive individuals and liberal or leftist causes.

The divisions that will eventually destroy the fabric of Chilean life are played out in the Trueba family. Fiction and history are integrated, as real characters interact with imaginary ones. Throughout the book, there are glimpses of Pablo Neruda, always referred to as The Poet. We first see him as a young man reading his works in Clara’s living room, and later as a world-renowned artist “on whose knees Alba often sat, little suspecting that one day she would walk behind his casket, between two rows of machine guns.”

There are also references to Salvador Allende as The Candidate, whom we first encounter as “a charismatic, nearsighted doctor who could move huge crowds with his passionate speeches...” and later on as friend and chess partner of Esteban’s son Jaime, with

whom he shares his final hours in the presidential palace on the morning of the 1973 coup.

History eventually catches up with all the fictional characters. Fantasy and poetic invention are overwhelmed by the brutal realities of the Chilean holocaust. After Augusto Pinochet led the army to defeat the Allende presidency and the Chilean constitution, the Truebas suffer the fate of the tens of thousands of Chileans who were tortured, exiled or murdered. Through them we see how Chileans reacted to the coup. We share in the surprise and relief experienced in some circles followed by dismay and fear as it became apparent that political parties were to be indefinitely recessed, Parliament to be suspended and civil liberties and human rights abandoned in an unprecedented effort to dismantle the entire Chilean political system. The novel becomes an eloquent and authentic work of documentary fiction.

### Diaries.

The character author of the book is presumably Alba Trueba, whose

grandfather Esteban advises her to write. “That way you’ll be able to take your roots with you if you ever have to leave.” To write her testimony Alba draws upon the recollections of her grandfather and upon her grandmother Clara’s diaries, which Clara kept from childhood until her death.

The diary is a private narrative. It is not meant to be published, nor even to be read by others. Historically, women, who were cut

*In Isabel Allende’s novel, characters exist against the backdrop of Chilean history.*



Writer Isabel Allende, niece of former President Salvador Allende

Peter Deitch



off from public discourse, have used diaries to register their personal activities, reflections and feelings, but Alba transforms the fragmented private diary entries into a linear narration. She shows how events that were far removed in time and space were related and gives foreshadowings of what even her clairvoyant grandmother was unable to see. "At times I feel as if I had lived all this before and that I have already written these very words, but I know it was not I: it was another woman who kept her notebooks so that one day I could use them. I write, she wrote, that memory is fragile and the space of a single life is brief, passing so quickly that we never get a chance to see the relation between events."

In fact, few of the men in the novel appear to be more than stereotyped Hispanic machos. Both Esteban and his illegitimate descendent Esteban García (his grandmother was raped by Trueba), strive to assert absolute power and total control. They are history's rapists, literally and figuratively. We see them through the eyes of the women whom they oppress.

In *The House of the Spirits* the traditional source of narrative power is reversed. The women are the creators and transmitters of the tale; the men are objectified by it. That is why Isabel Allende dedicates the novel to her mother, her grandmother and "all the other extraordinary women of this story." *The House of the Spirits* celebrates the power of women and the strength of the spiritual, physical and generational bonds between mothers, sisters and daughters. Although the freedom and autonomy of these extraordinary women is frequently circumscribed, they nevertheless manage to carve out a space for themselves.

While in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the men find refuge from wars and revolutions within the family home where nurturing women offer solace and protection, in the Trueba home the men do not find refuge. The domestic realm is not a complimentary but an alternative zone of activity. The house is the domain of female hegemony. No matter what kind of power Esteban wields in the Senate or on his estate, he is not in control at home.

As compensation for their limited power in the outside world these women take over the domestic space and make it the realm of independence, creativity and solidarity. Clara writes her diaries and communes with spirits; Blanca fashions little clay animals and hides her lover; Alba writes the novel and carries on an affair with a revolutionary student. Children are born. And it is this female power to create—be it books or babies—that is celebrated in *The House of the Spirits*.

Allende's novel is a testimony to the strength of these women—Clara, Blanca, Alba. In Isabel Allende they have found a female chronicler whose flawed but moving first novel records what happens to those who are not the bold conquerors, noble patriots, ruthless dictators and feverish rebels who have been the focus of Latin American history and literature. Perhaps in subsequent books she will give us more stories about the continent's unknown foremothers. ■

**Katharine S. Kovacs** teaches French and Spanish literature at Whittier College in California.

IN PRINT



## HISTORY

# An update on the Allende story

**The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende**

By Nathaniel Davis  
Cornell University Press,  
480 pp., \$24.95

By Patrick Breslin

IN 1928, AN ARTICLE APPEARED in the *Hispanic American Historical Review* with the irresistible title: "Was Patrick Egan a 'Blundering Minister'?" Egan had been U.S. ambassador to Chile almost four decades earlier, when a revolution overthrew President Jose Manuel Balmaceda. He was criticized for siding with Balmaceda and ending up on the outs with Chile's new rulers. Based on newly released government documents, the 1928 article argued that Egan had not blundered, but rather had diligently carried out his instructions from Washington. Balmaceda had threatened to nationalize Chilean mines, then largely controlled by English interests, and the U.S., still at an early stage of its expansionism, favored the weakening of English influence in South America.

What sort of minister was Nathaniel Davis, U.S. ambassador to Chile from 1971 to 1973, and what were his instructions? Historians trying to answer that question won't find much help in Nathaniel Davis' curiously opaque book. Despite its mass of detail and its 53 pages of footnotes, the book reveals little new information about Davis' own actions or about events in Chile.

Those events bore eerie parallels to Balmaceda's times. Davis presented his credentials as ambassador to a Chilean president, Salvador Allende, who not only talked about nationalization but had already taken over the great copper mining companies without compensation. Like Balmaceda, Allende was fiercely opposed by an opposition majority in the Chilean Congress. And like Balmaceda, he died as his government fell on top of him under the

onslaught of Chilean armed forces.

The main differences are that Allende was a Marxist, head of a coalition made up primarily of Communists and socialists and based on working-class votes, that the property he nationalized had belonged to U.S. companies, and that for those reasons he was hated by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. The other main difference, of course, is that the U.S. administration had no problem at all with the government that replaced Allende, even when it killed U.S. citizens.

### Surface praise.

On the surface, Davis' book is a surprising one for a U.S. diplomat to write. Davis makes Allende the central character of his study, and often speaks of him with affection. He goes out of his way to praise Allende's courage, his commitment to socialist ideals and his political skill. Davis, however, does not hesitate to include, without substantiation, every damaging, even salacious rumor about the Chilean president that floated around opposition circles.

There are other surprises. Davis discusses at length and in frank detail U.S. plotting against Allende in late 1970. He scoffs at U.S. fears that a Marxist regime in Chile presented a security threat to the U.S. He presents a detailed, and quite dispassionate summary of political events within Chile during Allende's last two years and argues that the electoral path to socialism must be kept open.

Throughout, Davis is at pains to present himself as a decent man trying to reconstruct honestly an important period of history that less scrupulous writers have distorted. He addresses two central questions: what political and economic events in Chile brought on the 1973 coup, and what the U.S. role was in that sequence of events. In the process, Davis promises "important new material for diplomatic historians." The promise is an empty one, and the book is a good deal less than it

**What was the U.S. role in the 1973 coup that killed Chilean President Salvador Allende?**

appears to be.

Davis' tracing of events in Chile 1971-73 is limited to a view of politics as the maneuvers of politicians, generals and interest group leaders, and presents none of the sweep of history nor the conflict of social forces that would be needed to understand the Allende period. Far from providing new information, much of it is based on secondary sources. The overall purpose though is clear: to make the point that Allende's own mistakes brought on his downfall.

That brings up the second of Davis' central concerns—the U.S. role. Despite official denials, the suspicion lingers that the U.S. was involved in the 1973 coup. Thanks to the investigation of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities (the Church Committee), more is known about U.S. intelligence activities in Chile than in any other country on the globe. But one large question remains. With the failure of the CIA attempts to block Allende from office after he won the 1970 elections, did the U.S. call off its efforts and let events in Chile run their course? Or was the U.S. involved, even indirectly, in the military coup that ended Chile's experiment with the electoral path to socialism? The Church Committee ended its investigation saying it did not find evidence of a U.S. role in the coup. Ever since, apologists for U.S. policy have cited that statement as absolute vindication.

### Nothing new.

Davis adds little new information to the examination of that question. His account of CIA plotting against Allende is taken entirely from material already put on the public record by the Church Committee. Assuming that Davis' account is truthful, part of the purpose of recounting already documented facts may spring from the revelations by the Church Committee that the CIA, at the instructions of the White House, had

**On the surface, Davis' book is surprising for a U.S. diplomat.**

IN THESE TIMES AUG. 7-20, 1985 19 bypassed Edward Korry, the U.S. ambassador in 1970. Korry was kept in the dark about Track II, the covert plan to encourage a military coup that would block Allende from assuming the presidency. Did the CIA continue to plan and organize for a coup behind Davis' back? Will eventually released documents, or the future testimony of an insider reveal that Davis, too, was dancing in the dark?

"For 10 years," says Davis, "I have made it my business to discover whether such activities were also carried on behind my back. Pending some future disclosure, I believe I knew the essentials of what was transpiring?"

With that somewhat less than ringing assertion of faith, Davis is ready to echo the official line, even though there was a whole list of covert activities during his tour (all of them revealed not by Davis but by the Church Committee) of which he was not informed.

And what is the basis for his belief that he now knows the essentials of the story? He says he has received personal assurances from CIA officials that there were no other covert activities during his tour beyond those uncovered by the Committee. Those assurances satisfied him, even though it was CIA officials who originally kept him in the dark.

And the evidence that CIA covert activities pointed toward a coup were stopped? Davis, in perhaps his only new contribution to the record, quotes from a letter David A. Phillips, chief of the CIA's Latin American clandestine operations at the time of the coup, sent him. According to Phillips, "Abe," a mysterious colleague who still does not wish to be further identified, sent the Santiago CIA station a letter in late 1971 that was not approved by anyone else. The letter did not order but "gently suggested, almost," that the coup plotting that had been hatched at President Nixon's explicit and forceful order be scrapped. And that, according to Phillips, and to Davis, was the end of U.S. connections with coup attempts. From then on, the CIA confined itself to "preserving democratic institutions" by slipping money under the table to politicians and right-wing editors, and to compiling arrest lists of leftists—"operational intelligence" about which Davis agrees he didn't have to be informed.

A dozen years have passed since most of the events Davis discusses. Earlier writers on the Allende period, especially those arguing the "U.S. hands were clean" thesis, labored under the disadvantage of having their theories and conclusions overturned by new disclosures, particularly about U.S. intelligence activities. The investigations are long over. Many of the principal actors, starting with Nixon and Kissinger, and including lesser lights in the CIA, have now published their memoirs. There is probably little new information likely to be revealed in the near future.

Davis has produced the latest, updated edition of the official version of the Allende period. It will probably continue to be the standard work defending that version until still secret U.S. government files are declassified, a distant possibility given today's climate. It took almost 40 years to get the full story on Patrick Egan. ■

**Patrick Breslin's novel, *Interventions*, is set in Chile during the period Davis describes.**



By Lucy R. Lippard

WHO SAYS ART IS POWERLESS? In 1977, at age 68, Elizabeth Layton saved her own life and added immeasurably to ours. The medium of salvation was large, colored-pencil drawings. The supplies were bought at the local drugstore in Wellsville, Kansas, where Layton—one of the most original (and most feminist) artists in the U.S. today—was born. Her drawings are not only “high quality,” but offer a view of American life rarely reflected in contemporary art. Aging, depression, dieting, marriage, grandmothering, death, Jonestown, world hunger, the nuclear threat, capital punishment, and the ERA are only a few of her subjects. Overriding them all is the theme of hope.

Layton came to hope the hard way, through a difficult childhood, five children, a “shameful” divorce, bouts of manic-depression, mental hospitals, electroshock, contemplated suicide and the death of a son, after which, at her sister’s suggestion, Layton signed up for a drawing course at nearby Ottawa University. There she was “discovered” by Don Lambert, a young reporter for the *Ottawa Herald* (a certain poetic justice here, since Layton is the daughter of a newspaper publisher and a columnist, and has been a journalist and managing editor herself).

Lambert saw two self portraits in a student show that made him laugh and cry and seek out the artist, who refused to see him. One of these drawings, in a spidery but forceful line, shows Layton and her granddaughter eating a Thanksgiving dinner of Kentucky Fried Chicken, while a happy turkey stalks outside. The other shows Layton, a very large old lady in a white veil and black slip, holding up in front of her bulk a dainty, old-fashioned wedding dress and displaying a red button that proclaims, “I am loved.”

Don Lambert persisted. He eventually became the artist’s friend and agent and introduced her to the World of Culture, which wasn’t altogether ready for her. But to make a long success story short, Layton has been crowned with honors since 1980. Among those honors is a full-scale retrospective exhibition that is traveling through 1986 under the auspices of the Mid-America Arts Alliance, accompanied by a handsome catalogue and excellent text by Lynn Bretz.

Pal Wright, who taught the drawing class at Ottawa, encouraged “contour drawing,” where the artist looks at the subject rather than at the page. “Drawing this way is simply fascinating,” says Layton. “Things just appear on the page. There they are. I don’t really have any say about what goes onto the paper.... Contour drawing is a wonderful way to get rid of anger or whatever you want to get rid of.”

“Elizabeth Layton had gone through the whole course of modern psychiatry, and it hadn’t really changed her life. Then she takes up drawing and cures herself,” marvels artist/therapist Robert Ault.

Wright said to draw large and “go to the edge” of the paper, and she suggested self portraits as the most available subject matter. But the sense of design Layton brought to her work is decidedly her own. Her compositions are as dynamic



“The Eyes of the Law” (top) and “Buttons” are prime examples of Layton’s expressive style.

unsentimental image of domestic content with two old hands, just touching; the unseen couple faces a window whose crossed curtains form a wonderful visual pun—a triangular piece of starry sky doubles as a Christmas tree burning at the top like a candle. In *Death of a Child*, an aged, grieving Layton suckles a baby at her

*Layton is a missionary for art as therapy. She has used art as a tool of self-development.*

breast, while over her shoulder, her husband’s hand offers a red bandanna handkerchief.

Why is this kind of identification and emotion so rare in our experience of art? Is it not considered “exalted enough” because it does speak directly to so many people?

## ART

## Kansas artist’s work fuses personal and political



as the minute details. Unlike so-called “naïve” or “primitive” artists, she is not a prisoner of the frontal view. Totally unafraid of odd angles, scale changes and other “modernist” tactics, she draws bodies from strange perspectives, while never sacrificing her strong sense of realism. Her drawings are vortices into which she draws the viewer with all the force that she herself experiences in the process of artmaking. Freedom might be her middle name. She has the experimental courage not only of her convictions but of an avant-garde art education she

never had.

Layton is a missionary for art as therapy, but the fact remains, she gave as good as she got. She has used art for exorcism, catharsis, an instrument of self-transformation, but so do all artists. Her art might not have been such good therapy if she were not such a good artist. At the same time, it’s not as “high” above it all as art is supposed to be—it’s right down here with us. Its breadth and intimacy must touch something in the lives of everyone who sees it.

In *Christmas Eve*, 1977, for instance, Layton offers a uniquely

“For the most part, what I draw is for other people who are like me and may be troubled by their feelings,” says Layton. “You’d never believe the wonderful letters I get from people who have seen the show. And to me that’s the whole thing. It’s not whether this is art or not. I don’t care.... I think any of my family will tell you they would never have recognized this as art. And if they had, they would not have known what to do with it.”

Nowhere in art have old age and marriage been depicted so honestly and yet with such emotional

force—not as saccharine lies but with the true bittersweetness of experience. The faces that peer out of Layton’s drawings are usually her own and that of her second husband, Glenn. They are long, lined, unabashedly spotted and battered by age. Glenn Layton is caught in his underpants on the bathroom scale, “just home from the hospital, struggling mightily to gain pounds.” In *Last Rose of Summer*, he stands in the kitchen with an early morning offering of one yellow rose, while his wife’s hand emerges from the corner with a slice of lemon meringue pie in return. One of Layton’s eyes is half closed, so she has used this “wink” in several witty drawings, especially one where she flirts in a lacy, almost topless garment, a bottle of perfume and a Cinderella-like slipper floating at the side.

I’ve begun to wonder why so few artists have pictured older people, aside from the occasional portrait or “how-quaint-what-a-wonderful-face” syndrome. (Photographers are the exception.) Feminists are increasingly interested in the process of aging, given the peculiar social stigmas borne by the “non-young” woman, and the fact that some 75 percent of the aged poor are women. Yet like other personal/social experiences, it is an unspoken taboo in the high art world.

Elizabeth Layton is able to tackle such difficult content because she doesn’t give a damn about the art world. She has unselfconsciously mastered the fusion of personal and political that so many progressive artists strive for. By using her own image to stand for all of denigrated, invisible, abused humanity, she has raised the universal from the particular. In *Pushing Up the Daisies*, she drew herself in the grave, attended by birds, animals and insects (a worm emerging from her heart), and she drew her skin black, because “people of other colored skin have the same feelings.”

Layton is Everywoman, resisting the evils of the modern world. In a protest against capital punishment, it is the artist with the noose around her neck; in *Garden of Eden*, she is an aged Eve, hollering in anger at “being blamed for all the sins of the world.” In *Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined....*, she puffs a weed while a gun is held to her head, while behind her pollution rises from a spiraling highway and a mushroom cloud looms. She is Pandora struggling to hold the lid on her box, to contain “No Hope”—a grimacing male head surrounded by bats labeled “age, poverty, apathy, bias, hate, war, waste.” It is Layton who emits the *Nuclear Scream* and becomes *Liza Crossing the River*. It is her face reflected in the dark glasses of uniform rows of CIA types...and she is thumbing her ears at them.

It is Elizabeth Layton flexing her muscles in a radiant, grinning portrait, showing off a broad chestful of political buttons. And it is Elizabeth Layton whose arms and head replace the missing parts of the Winged Victory, with her Nike sneakers slung over her shoulder, who says: “Now she is where she wants to be and ready to fly. Scars, where the arms and head of the statue were broken off, now are only the hallmarks of the new and everlasting growth.” ■

Lucy Lippard, whose most recent book is *Getting the Message? A Decade of Art for Social Change* (Dutton), writes on art and politics monthly for *In These Times*.



“CAN AN ARTIST MAKE A revolution?” asks Argentine saxophonist and Latin jazz conjurer of revolutionary sound Gato Barbieri. “No, you can bring revolution into your art, but you can’t make a revolution with art. The revolution has to come by political means. But perhaps music, if it’s beautiful enough, can help people begin to change a little bit—begin to change their consciousness so that they will be ready to move in other ways, political ways.”

Barbieri’s words of wisdom are culled from Rob Backus’ cogent book of quotes, *Fire Music: A Political History of Jazz*. The book lives and breathes the inherently political effects of creating an art both oppositional to the status quo (in intent and content) and also wedded to the must-haves and aspirations of an oppressed national minority—in the case of jazz, Afro-America. Barbieri’s quote is especially heavy when doing any analysis of alternatives to the current glut of cultural waste coming from the it-doesn’t-have-to-be-good-it-just-has-to-be-hyped-right entertainment marketplace.

Into the trench war for the minds of the people are thrust the poets. Or, as they refer to themselves, the Last Poets. These sultans of the oral signposts of Afro-America are off into some serious “spoo-graphics.” Translation: “spoken pictures of oppression.” The method used to transmit these militant thought waves in a post-industrial society is still the record album. For now, no soap boxes, no ghetto corners. Let’s see some chart action—but on *our* terms.

A visionary, New York-based independent record label has provided the mechanism for these new and old poetic revelations. The label, Celluloid, has re-released two seminal Last Poets LPs: *The Last Poets* (1970) and *This Is Madness* (1971). Meanwhile, Last Poet Jalaluddin Mansur Nuriddin has updated one of the group’s most right-on verses, “Mean Machine” (1971), by adding the latest studio wizard innovations adapted from New York’s Hip Hop street scene via Grand Mixer D. ST. (available as a 12-inch single on Celluloid). Lastly, the newly revamped full group has put their trenchant historical and sociopolitical analysis to work on the all-new *Oh My People*.

Though the Last Poets have been dormant for near a decade, the turbulent fires of ‘60s ebonyisms (Fanonism, Nkrumaism, neo-Garveyism, H. Rap Brownism, Carmichaelism, Xism, Pantherism) that fueled these urban street priests have been kept ignited—to a degree—by contemporary rappers like Melle Mel, Run-D.M.C., and Divine Sounds (“They were napping while we were rapping,” quips Nuriddin). The Last Poets’ return is not only a political second-coming, but also cause for cultural rejoicing.

Letting the three albums soak into your conscious and subconscious mind—making the recesses twitch with apprehension and excitement—you can truly understand Amiri Baraka’s analysis of this art form: “Poetry, first of all, was and still must be, a musical form. It is speech *musicked*. It, to be most powerful, must reach to where speech begins, as sound, and bring the sound into full focus as highly rhythmic communication” (from the liner notes to Baraka’s album *New Music-New*

*Poetry*, on India Navigation, 1982). But along with stylistic virtuosity must come the guts, and the proper perspective. As Last Poet Alafia Pudim once said: “I’m a ‘mystorian.’ History means *HIS* story, not *My* story. My story, he calls a mystery, so I’m a mystorian. A black mystorian.”

The albums are as much a comparison and contrast between different historical periods, as they

post-MLK Jr. anarchic violence, and subsequent where-do-we-go-from-here? let down.

“Black People What Y’all Gon’ Do” from *This Is Madness* underscores the point: “Black people, what y’all gon’ do when you wake up and find that you’re dead with magots and roaches eating the pus out of your prostituted minds, and white deathly hands massaging your heart with red hot branding

like Gil Scott-Heron, who used congas and flute with this guerilla word play.

So the Last Poets are now back. For the most part the new album, *Oh My People*, is more sedate, the anger seemingly cooled by two decades of government band-aid relief “programs.” The seething black nationalist polemic that produced “Opposites” is now washed by 20 years of integration, assimilation and the growth—however

small—of the black middle class. The nasty, graphic, false consciousness-stripping edge of the Poets’ best work has been doused with a more benign metaphorical thrust within which it’s not really clear if our challengers of the status quo are frustrated, burned-out, selling-in, or merely attempting a more “sophisticated” approach. That’s not to say they

more cute studio tricks than any fiery food for thought. Though the verses many times speak an objective truth, this exhortation for folks to get up off their butts certainly isn’t as effective as their debut’s “Wake Up Niggers”—hence the cut comes off merely as a good-natured public service announcement. The sing-songy “Hold Fast,” on the other hand, has more political teeth, but some of what would be the best lines get smothered by synthesized bass burps.

The rest of *Oh My People* avoids that annoying problem, instead featuring three roots-oriented percussion’n’voice tracks and one solo a capella number. The best of these is the title song. “Oh My People” is a spiritually invigorating, flowing rain forest of drumming highlighted by ex-Art Ensemble of Chicago member Phillip Wilson’s ticking cymbal shading, and Jamal Abdus Sabur’s supple bass figure. Historical self-knowledge and self-pride are the lyrical focus.

“This Is Your Life” is a haunting whisper-chant given a glowing, fluid feel by Worrell’s kalimba-like synth melody. The poem bobs and creeps like a Mandingo warrior preparing for battle as it attempts to melt away the

## POETRY

# The roots of rap return in guerrilla word play

are a study of the longevity, response, and transformation of an intellectually motivated group of artists. The early albums were cathartic explosions of raging profundities aimed at cutting through both pseudo-liberal political platitudes and the reactionary blubberings of Nixon, the Klan and others. The oral assault was also designed to slap the black masses back to life following the

irons?”

Less purely political topics were dealt with also: specifically, drug abuse and sex. “O.D.” (from *This Is Madness*) is a chilling, gut-wrenching account of a heroin junkie waking up and watching his family and friends look down at him as he’s being buried. The tongue-in-cheek “Gash Man,” along with “Black Thighs,” celebrate, in X-rated detail, the erotic

lution and the growth—however small—of the black middle class. The nasty, graphic, false consciousness-stripping edge of the Poets’ best work has been doused with a more benign metaphorical thrust within which it’s not really clear if our challengers of the status quo are frustrated, burned-out, selling-in, or merely attempting a more “sophisticated” approach. That’s not to say they



Jamal Abdus Sabur (left), Kenyatti Abdur Rahman, Suliaman El-Hadi and Jalaluddin Mansur Nuriddin are the Last Poets.

*The difference between the Last Poets of today and those of yesteryear is like the difference between Jesse Jackson and pre-Mecca Malcolm X.*

wonders of black womanhood—not only to counter the Cover Girl, blonde-haired, blue-eyed beauty aesthetic, but to parody the black male sexual myth, and to vent some lust.

Of course, none of this went down in a cultural/historical vacuum. The Last Poets were as much followers of an avant-garde movement as they were leaders of this new-thang twist on the King’s English. The seemingly sudden emergence of ‘60s black poetry—referred to by *Time* magazine in April 1970 as “the undaunted pursuit of fury”—was really an extension of an artistic process already in motion in the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. More readily, and closer to their stylistic groove, the Last Poets drew from the Langston Hughes readings—with jazz accompaniment—at the Five Spot in New York during the ‘50s. From there it wasn’t far to brothers

don’t get their licks in against the Raygun Regime—they do—but the difference between the Last Poets of today and those of yesteryear, is like the difference between today’s Democratic Jesse Jackson and pre-Mecca Malcolm X.

Because of the inclusion of electronic innovations, *Oh My People* is richer and more varied not only in its hooks, but purely on the level of sheer sound, where it gets off more sublimely than any Last Poets LP. Two of the contemporary rap-style tracks, “Get Movin’” and “Hold Fast,” augment traditional African percussion (talking drums, congas and cha-tan) with a variety of synthesizers courtesy of P-Funk keyboardist Bernie Worrell, and producer Bill Laswell.

“Get Movin’,” the current single, is a solid slab of beatbox funk that, unfortunately, contains

apathy of the black community, and the American electorate at large: “You have nothing to say, just hear and obey, just silently playing your roles, while others decide whether you live or die, and mad men man the controls.”

Whether the Last Poets’ latest cultural gift breaks through that apathy will depend on grassroots organizing as well as on record sales. Or maybe the Poets were more prophetic than usual when they uttered their most searing commentary of all in 1970: “Niggers are players...Niggers tell you they’re ready to be liberated, but when you say, ‘let’s go take our liberation,’ Niggers reply, ‘I was just playin’.’ Niggers are playin’ with revolution and losing. Niggers are scared of revolution!” Only in 1985, “niggers” come in all shades.

David H. Adams is a Minneapolis music critic and DJ.



# Miskitos

Continued from page 9  
tainty about the situation.

In spite of any dangers, the people are determined to continue moving back to the river, according to Miskito "elder" Rafael Dixon, 64, who is head of the Waspam return project.

"They feel as if they are in heaven," he said, looking out over the muddy river toward the Honduran side. "They are coming with nothing, with no house, but they are happy. Here we have land, this is our life. There [away from the river] we had no land, and life was no good." Dixon said one group of people walked 50 kilometers from Tasba Pri toward the river before continuing in vehicles, saying they were ready

to walk the entire distance if it had been necessary.

"I told them we need more time for Sandinistas to clear the mines, for the men to clean," he said. "But they no want to wait. All they want is to get to their home."

Standing in what remains of Waspam, Dixon pointed to the river's far side and explained how each year it would flood its banks, rejuvenating the soils and supplying bountiful food crops. He said people used to plant, gather fruit and hunt on both sides without regard to international boundaries. "Indian people know no frontiers," Dixon said. "Only the Spanish-speaking people make frontiers. And the river is always the same river, the Rio Coco."

*In These Times' correspondent William Gasperini was the first print journalist to reach the Rio Coco area since the 1982 evacuation.*

# Japan

Continued from page 13

that the chances of a dangerously remilitarized, nuclearized and expansionist Japan are slim, have declared that the Japanese public continues to stand solidly behind the Three Non-Nuclear Principles and low military spending. But what surveys also show (and this has not been reported in the West) is that a vast majority of Japanese believe that the Principles are already being violated and that a military build-up is well underway.

Most significant, the surveys indicate that the Japanese object to these changes on principle, but not in practice. Most of the public seems to feel that Japan, to remain prosperous, must not alienate its allies, particularly the U.S. And, like many Americans, they have responded in a reactionary way to their conservative leader's depictions of the Soviets as a growing threat.

While the rapid climb in the Japanese military budget is significant, it is by no

means the most compelling measure of the change in mood and direction in Japan. It is the following Nakasone-era developments that have been little studied in the West:

- In November 1983 Japan signed an agreement that permits it, for the first time, to transfer weapons technology to the U.S. In July this new policy was finally put into practice when the U.S. formally asked the Japanese to provide an "image-seeking device" to help guide missiles to their target.

"In a way, it's a test case to get the basic system set up," one American official told the *New York Times* last month. "Eventually, most of the significant military technology won't be publicized. It won't even be identified as military."

Now many are predicting that Japan will begin producing and exporting not just the technology for the weapons but weapons themselves.

- The U.S. has long tried to pressure Japanese prime ministers into agreeing to defend vital sea lanes within 1,000 miles of Japan. Nakasone was the first to agree to do so. This means that Japan, for the first time, has accepted the notion not only

of defending itself but also of essentially defending Western interests in the Pacific. Nakasone has also agreed to build up Japan's naval capability to block (in the event of a crisis) the straits leading from Vladivostok, home port for the Russian fleet. And for the first time, Japanese ground forces are participating in war games with American soldiers.

- In 1984 the U.S. began deploying sea-launched Tomahawk cruise missiles in the Pacific. Tomahawks fly close to the ground, have a range of 1,350 miles, are almost impossible to detect, can contain nuclear or conventional warheads and can be launched from practically any vessel that floats. When deployment is completed, several hundred nuclear-tipped Tomahawks will rest on ships in the Pacific. Many of these ships call on Japan or are based there.

Tomahawk deployment has sparked a resurgence of the peace movement in Japan. Demonstrators believe that the U.S., in violation of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, routinely brings nuclear weapons into Japanese waters or even off-loads them on land. (In their new *Nuclear Battlefields* book, which contains the most detailed listing ever about nuclear weapons deployment around the world, William Arkin and Richard Fieldhouse state uncategorically that "no nuclear weapons are stationed in Japan. However, as Tomahawk deployment increases, pressure on Japan to go nuclear will rise dramatically.

- For the first time a large number of the leaders of Nakasone's party are calling for repeal of Article 9 of Japan's constitution—the provision that renounces war and the mobilization of an offensive military force; Nakasone himself called for this before he became prime minister. These leaders, and others, are also calling for a modification of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles to allow Japan to openly accept nuclear weapons on its territory.

The Soviet Union has responded by expanding its Pacific fleet and by installing 135 of its new SS-20s missiles in Eastern Siberia. Many are targeted on Japan—and

on U.S. installations, like the Iwakuni Marine base, in Japan.

Twenty-four years ago Kunizo Hatanaka sent a letter to the commander of the Iwakuni Marine base asking him to request funds from the U.S. for the care of his microcephalic daughter Yoriko, who was exposed to the atomic bomb *in utero*. Today, sitting in his barber shop in Iwakuni, with Yoriko in a chair at his side leafing through a magazine, Hatanaka reads from that letter: "Even though we fought each other in World War II, I don't think you can find any fault in a three-month-old fetus...." He did not receive a response.

Hatanaka, who despite his travails speaks with great gusto and smiles warmly, is a keen observer of the nearby Iwakuni base and its impact on his city. He is amazed that, unlike in Hiroshima, peace education is not entrenched in the city's schools. Three years ago, he reports, teachers at one local school sponsored an exhibit of photographs of atomic bomb damage, and the principal closed it down. And he believes that nuclear weapons are stored at the Iwakuni base. "If it's a military base," he says simply, "it's only natural there will be nuclear weapons there."

While it would be easy for Hatanaka to dwell on the past, and the death of his wife and son due to A-bomb disease, he looks to the future. He says there is an expression in Japan—"the continuous candle fire." This means that before one candle goes out the next must be lit. That is why he is willing to talk about his experience and put his mute, sweet-faced daughter on display as a powerful symbol of the way nuclear attacks affect the innocent.

"Look at my daughter," Hatanaka says, almost pleading. "She is just leafing through the magazines because she cannot read. She doesn't understand they are weekly or monthly magazines. She wants a new one every day. Forty years after the atomic bombings we still have nuclear weapons. We have to get rid of them. Because of them, innocent children have to suffer, as you can see before your eyes. I want you to open your eyes very wide."

■ *Greg Mitchell is the editor of Nuclear Times and co-author of the recently published book, Acceptable Risks (Viking). He spent one month in Hiroshima and Nagasaki on a grant from the Hiroshima International Cultural Foundation.*



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CHICAGO, IL

August 9

No More Hiroshimas, No More Nagasakis Rally at Daley Civic Center (Dearborn & Washington Sts.) featuring E.L. Doctorow, Dr. Jack Geiger, Sidney Lens, Alice Peurata, Erik Jacobsson, William Hohri and Fred Holstein. The Civic Center will be ringed with part of "The Ribbon." The Mayor's Office for Special Events is cooperating in this Commemoration. For more information: Hiroshima/Nagasaki Commemoration Committee, 343 S. Dearborn, Suite 1113, (312) 663-1227.

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For more information please contact: Felicity Bensch, Assistant Publisher, *In These Times*, 1300 West Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657. Phone (312) 472-5700.



## Continued from page 17

From the standpoint of reform, it certainly makes sense to improve the working girl's situation, hoping that antagonism between hookers and town burghers will then also abate. As Pheterson put it, "If the community is uncomfortable for prostitutes, the working conditions for prostitutes are probably inadequate."

According to a Universalist Church (Quaker) Service Community survey, nine out of 10 prostitutes in jails said they'd do something else if it paid as well. In Pheterson's study of white, middle-class, escort-service workers, none of whom had ever been arrested, 50 percent said they liked the work and, though they would go on to other jobs later, tricking was o.k. for now. "But it's a hypothetical question," notes St. James. "There is no other job that offers such good money for so little skill. In 1977 Phyllis Schlafley told me if I reformed, she would get me a job. I said, 'No, thank you—\$3.00 an hour to take all your abuse and judgement.'

Sounds like prostitution, with a little solidarity from your union, could be a lark. But we won't know if women—or men—will choose it until tricking is less hazardous and more under their control. In short, until hookers organize—and this is still very dif-

It's hard to build a prostitute movement when prostitutes are not out of the closet. The issue here is what organizers call "the whore stigma." It's the abuse and judgment St. James expected from Schlafley, and it's at the heart of the prostitutes' rights effort because the stain of whoring is what prevents prostitution from being called work. Prostitution is not seen as a job, it's a moral state of being—or rather, an immoral one. It's an identity. Like membership in the Communist Party, it brands you for life, burrowing through your past, ready to be exhumed as the fateful skeleton. It is shameful, and the ignominy is as much an obstacle to other work as a police record. And the stigma justifies violence: if the whore is already "bad," she deserves whatever punishment and vituperation she gets.

Skeptics who think this a bit global should compare the prospects of men and women in the life. Women—hooker or not—may have more in common than prostitutes—male or female. With the exception of transvestites, male prostitutes suffer police harassment far less than women, and boy hookers are better paid and treated than teenage girls because johns tend to identify with the youths. Male porn models, far from being trash, are practically heroes. And for men, even the mark of prostitution is not as damning. Not only doesn't it hamper them after they leave the life, it's not particularly damaging while they're still in it. "The woman is a slut, the man is a stud," Pheterson said. "The woman loses points for sex, the man gains points. The woman gets the scarlet

No wonder it's tough for prostitutes to begin a political movement—as tough as it was for gays 15 years ago. But it's especially important now that they do. Ed Meese's porn commission is baldly conservative, and the Dworkin-MacKinnon anti-porn bill, passed in Indianapolis but declared unconstitutional by the federal district court, is on appeal in the Seventh Circuit Court. Local right-wing groups are going after porn magazines and videos and the stores that sell them all over the country; New York state recently passed a brown-wrapper bill. As the LAPD generously reminded us, in any purity campaign sex industry workers take a beating.

**Marcia Pally** writes frequently on feminist issues and has written for the *Village Voice* and *Harpers*.

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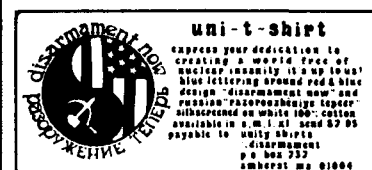
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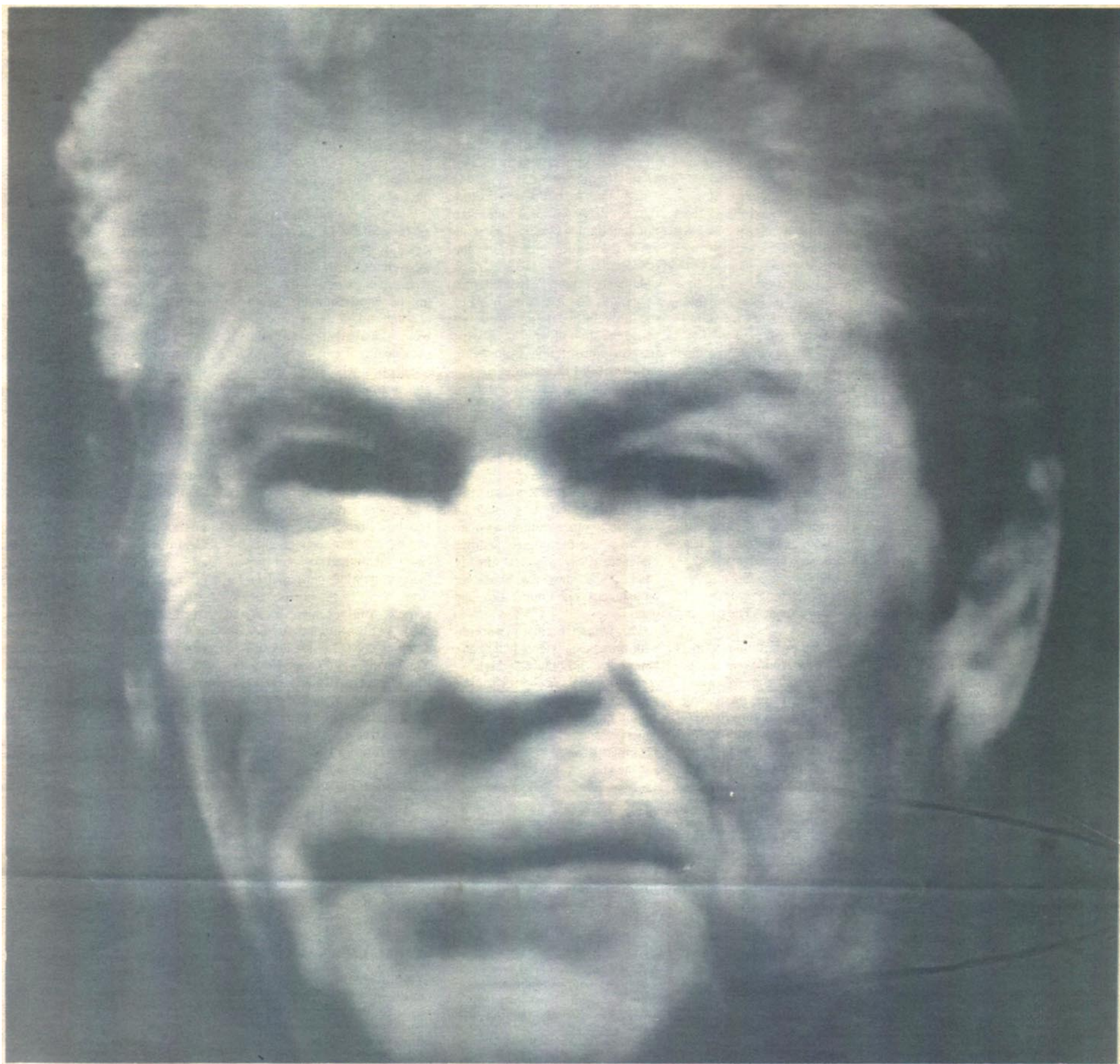
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# A

By Joan Walsh

LOS ANGELES

**D**IVERSION-SEEKERS BORED WITH L.A.'s usual lineup of theaters, restaurants, nightclubs and health clubs have another option this month—a roster of star-studded debates, panel discussions, art shows and theater events on war, peace and nuclear weapons. Don't smirk: people are attending.

Gallery-goers who don't normally patronize politically explicit art shows are attending exhibits on nuclear war, attracted by internationally known artists like Jonathan Borofsky, Lita Albuquerque, Ed Ruscha and Kazuaki Kita. For the politically enlightened, the city is full of shows exhibiting the newest anti-war work by well-known socially concerned artists, like Judy Baca, Sheila Pinkel and Linda Lopez.

L.A.'s churches and synagogues are also focusing this month on anti-nuclear messages at 2,000 services reaching one million people. It's all part of "Imagine There's a Future," an arts festival commemorating the 40th anniversary of the atomic blasts that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki that's turned out to be by far the largest such event anywhere in the country.

Traditionally L.A.'s Hiroshima-

Nagasaki Commemoration is a small, solemn affair, held in Little Tokyo, home of the nation's largest Japanese-American population. But for the 40th anniversary, community leaders wanted to involve the whole city. That fit in perfectly with the plans of the Pasadena-based Interfaith Center to Reverse the Arms Race, which was looking to hold a Hiroshima-Nagasaki event that would transcend the bounds of the peace community. "Rallies and demonstrations only attract the already converted," said Interfaith Center member and arts festival co-chair Marvin Schachter. "We thought we should use the occasion to break out of our confines."

The center linked up with the Hollywood Women's Coalition, a group of mostly liberal women in the entertainment industry noted for some high-power Mondale-Ferraro fundraising last year. Early support came from the Southern California Ecumenical Council and Board of Rabbis. Starting last fall, organizers began planning a three-ring arts festival: cultural, religious and broadly political.

Pulling together the 46 co-sponsors and endorsers took a lot of contacts—including are all the major peace groups and mainstream religious organizations—but was surprisingly conflict-free. Perhaps the biggest surprise was the support of the

Catholic Archdiocese, led by conservative Cardinal Timothy Manning. Based on the bishops' anti-nuclear pastoral, the chancery sent letters to all 453 parishes in the archdiocese, urging them to commemorate Hiroshima and Nagasaki in their masses. Manning himself will say a commemorative mass in Little Tokyo.

"We let people approach it the way they wanted to," Schachter said. "Some churches might want to deal with the sophisticated issues of the arms race; some might want to deal with it non-politically."

That same ecumenical spirit guided the planning of symposia, and produced a roster of topics ranging from apartheid to the roots of conflict in Central America and the Middle East to American machismo. Tackling jobs and the arms race, the Cold War and military intervention, nuclear-free pension portfolios and other political complexities, the symposia are for people who want some substance with their spirituality. But the focus is on debate and discussion, not preaching.

"Imagine There's a Future" is decidedly non-partisan and non-ideological, which Schachter counts as the reason for its broad success. A former American Civil Liberties Union national vice chair and a co-chair of the 1982 California Nuclear Weapons Freeze initiative, he believes new ap-

"Warhead III," by Nancy Burson, is a composite of the five leaders of the "nuclear club," weighted according to their dominance in 1985.

proaches are essential. "People say the peace movement is in the doldrums, and that really concerns me. But I think the national movement can learn from what we did here. We wanted to reach people who'd rather not think about these things."

Naturally those of us who think about these things way too much are always slightly uncomfortable with bold, new approaches. It reminded me of a conversation I had last month with Diana Johnstone about an anti-racism rally/rock concert in Paris that drew 300,000 people. It grew out of a neighborhood-based campaign established to combat violence against North Africans, as well as the larger sociopathology stirred up by Jacques LePen's racist, right-wing National Front. (Slogan for the rally is "Don't touch my pal.") But laudable as the crusade was, Diana had reservations. "It's just not French. The French have always been so analytical, everything had to be so 'political.' This seems...American."

"You mean it's 'nice'?" I asked. She laughed. "Exactly."

"Imagine There's a Future" is nothing if not nice, yet that's not necessarily a criticism. American politics is anything but, so nice takes on a whole new significance. ■